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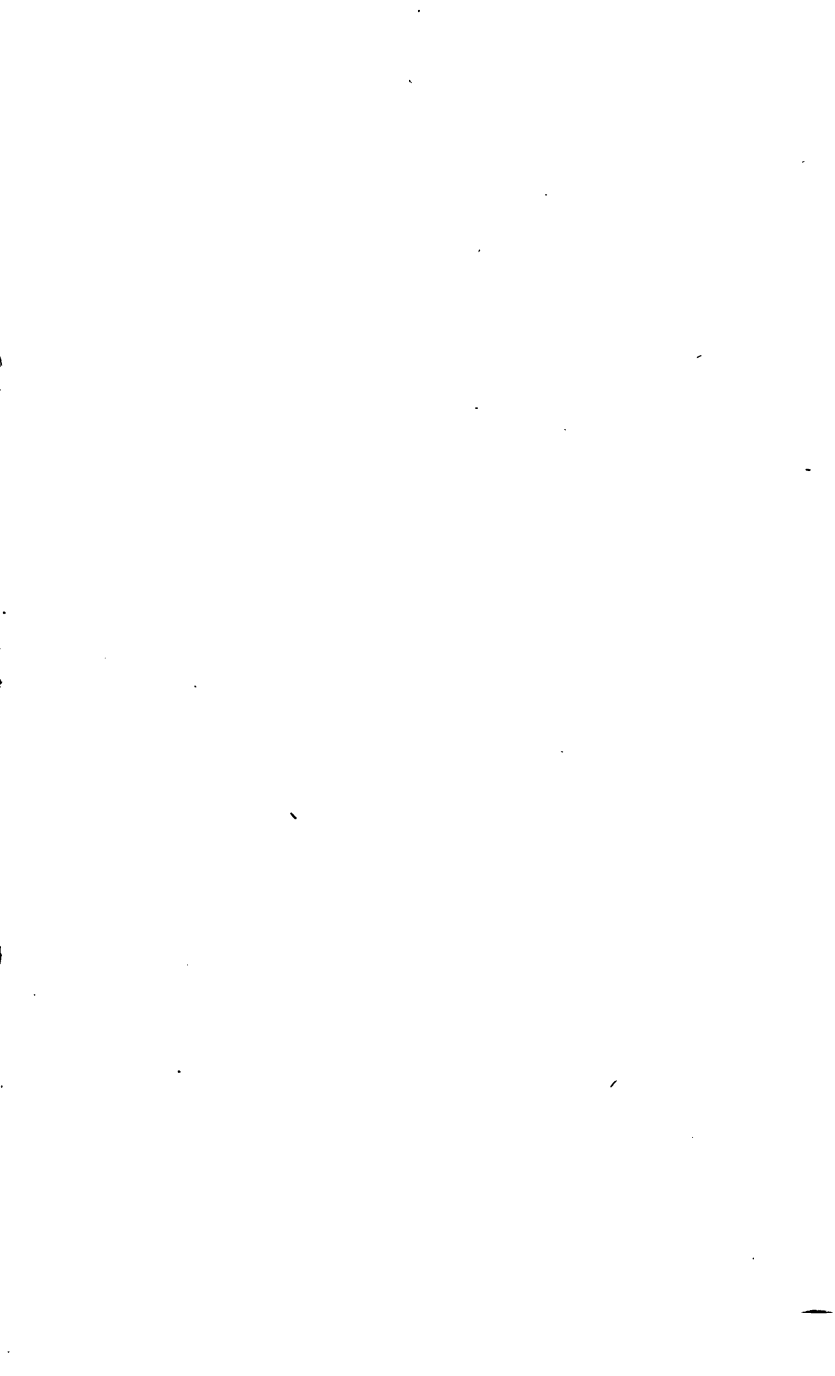
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Amelia





A CONCISE HISTORY.



A

CONCISE HISTORY,
OF THE EFFORTS TO OBTAIN AN
EXTENSION OF SUFFRAGE
IN RHODE ISLAND;

FROM THE YEAR 1811 TO 1842.

By JACOB FRIEZE.

SECOND EDITION.

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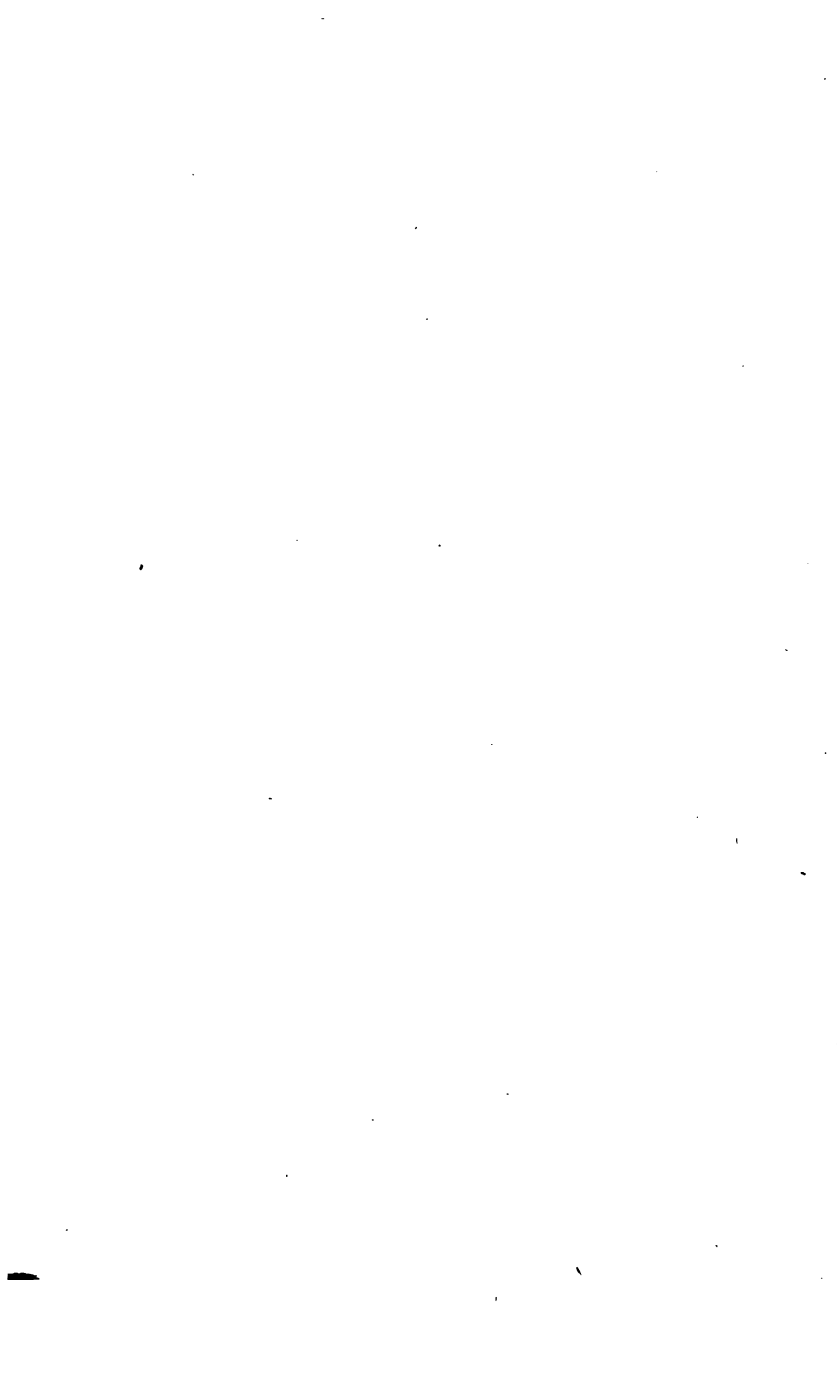
Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1842,

By JACOB FRIEZE,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of Rhode Island.

PREFACE.

The object of the writer, in this little and unpretending volume, has been, to make a plain and simple statement of facts. If he has failed to do so, the failure has been unintentional.



CONCISE HISTORY.



CONCISE HISTORY.

CHAPTER I.

CIVIL government is an institution designed for the mutual safety and protection of mankind, and for the promotion of that mutual happiness, for which an all-wise and benevolent Creator appears to have intended for his creatures. That all men are by nature free and equal, is an axiom in philosophy which no one will controvert, and which all liberal and enlightened statesmen freely admit without question. It is a maxim which constitutes the basis of all democratic republics, and which is fully recognised as the great fundamental principle of the government of these United States. Because all men are by nature free and equal, and because a free government is designed for mutual protection, safety, and happiness, such a government must be a mutual compact or covenant among equals; and hence the republican maxim, that all the rightful powers of government are derived from the people, and are to be exercised for their good.

But government is also an affair of necessity. With the complete natural freedom with which man

comes into the world, with a consciousness of perfect equality among the entire human family, and with the infirmities to which all are subject, neither safety nor happiness could long exist without an organization in some form, and a controlling sovereign power lodged somewhere, to reduce the body to obedience to such rules as might appear best calculated to advance the great object of human existence. If the God of nature has made all men free and equal, so has he implanted a rule of action in the human breast, by which all men are bound to respect the rights and to promote the happiness of each other. But, as men seem inclined to overstep that rule, to gratify their selfish propensities, and thereby step aside from the rule of right, the necessity becomes obvious, to associate together in bodies politic, in which, by mutual agreement, the power shall be placed in the hands of a few, to make and enforce laws for the government of the many. That government, and that power, however, are not created for the benefit alone of those to whom they are entrusted. Their object is the public good — or, as *Burlamaqui* happily expresses it, "*for the good of the whole in general, and of every individual in particular.*" No one will doubt the necessity of government. It is not a mere matter of choice of the few or the many. It is a matter of right and necessity due to each and every individual ; because it is the right of every one to be protected against the violence of every other one, and to pursue measures, without impediment, to promote his own happiness, provided he do not inflict injury

on others. This necessity creates in the majority, the right to impose laws on the minority ; and it confers on that majority, the authority to enforce those laws : — Provided always, that the minority shall enjoy safety and protection with the majority, and suffer no curtailment of privileges, but what the welfare of the whole may demand.

If this view be correct, it will at once be seen, that, when a majority of members of the body politic become dissatisfied with the form and principles of their government, and convinced that it does not tend to the object for which governments are or should be erected, they have the undoubted right to effect a change. This principle is theoretically recognised in the American Constitutions, as a necessary attribute of the popular sovereignty. But there is a principle paramount even to this ; and which must, in all cases, be allowed to take precedence of it. The social tie, the basis of all government, must never be dissolved nor impaired, except in compliance with absolute necessity ; because, by such an act, anarchy is created, and the public weal endangered. All revolutions dissolve the existing restraints or impair them, and weaken the respect for government and laws ; and no man can bear and discharge the awful responsibility, for the terrible evils that may intervene between the demolition of one government, and the erection of another, by revolutionary movements. As the first formation of government is a matter of absolute necessity, so should a revolution be ; and so it must be in order to its justification. No act of

violence to effect a change against the wishes of even a small minority, can ever be justified, as long as a hope remains of effecting that change in a legal and peaceable manner, and after a long and patient forbearance under oppression. Such were the views and feelings of our revolutionary sires, as set forth by them in the Declaration of Independence. They plead their long and patient suffering, and the absolute refusal of the mother country to listen to their humble petitions, memorials and remonstrances. And it was after all these had failed, and after the mother country had prepared to demand and enforce her oppressive laws at the point of the bayonet, and at the cannon's mouth, that the cord was severed which bound her American colonies to allegiance. Thus was the necessity for revolution made apparent. A necessity not originating in the fact that the American colonies were oppressed, but in the absolute refusal of the mother country to remove the hand of oppression, the actual employment of force, and even the shedding of blood, to enforce her arbitrary and oppressive laws, and the consequent conclusion, that, resistance must be opposed to tyranny, or the fetters of slavery worn by the American people. On this ground alone, was the American Revolution justifiable. But, at the time the Declaration of American Independence was put forth, and when the patriotic colonists were treading the battle-field in hostile array, had there been a body of commissioners appointed by the British government, actually in session to consider our grievances, to consult the wishes of the people, and

to devise modes of redress, who would have considered the measures of the colonists any thing better than rebellion and treason? The necessity for revolution would not and could not have existed, till it should have been known that redress was finally and fully refused. Then, and not till then, could violent measures be justified. It was otherwise — and for that reason only, our revolutionary fathers became patriots and heroes, who else would have been rebels and traitors. Burke says, “It is the first and supreme necessity only, a necessity that is not chosen, but chooses — a necessity paramount to deliberation ; that admits no discussion, and demands no evidence, which alone can justify a resort to anarchy.”

CHAPTER II.

I have offered the foregoing preliminary remarks, because there are many people at home and abroad, who appear to consider the late attempt at revolution in Rhode Island, to be analagous, if not parallel, to that which proved so eminently successful in the days that “tried men’s souls ;” and by which, the American colonies became free and Independent States. A candid and impartial statement of facts in the following pages, will enable the reader to compare the two cases, and to judge for himself how far they resemble each other. And, in order to refresh the memory, it

may be found necessary, occasionally, to refer back, and to compare notes as we proceed.

It will not be deemed necessary, in this brief epitome, to go into a labored history of the Rhode Island government. But it will be expedient, in order to have the whole case before us, and to correct false impressions, to advert to some of its most prominent portions and features.

The fact is well and universally known, that the only written fundamental law of the State, is, the Colonial Charter granted by Charles 2nd, King of Great Britain, in the year 1663. So much of that Charter as is necessary to the present purpose, because it involves the main question now at issue, is as follows : —

“ And further, we do, of our especial grace, certain knowledge, and mere motion, give and grant unto the said Governor and Company of the English colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, in New England, in America, and their successors, that the Governor, or, in his absence, or by his permission, the Deputy Governor of the said Company, for the time being, the Assistants, and such of the freemen of the said Company, as shall be so as aforesaid elected or deputed, or so many of them as shall be present at such meeting or assembly, as aforesaid, shall be called the General Assembly ; and that they, or the greatest part of them then present, whereof the Governor or Deputy Governor, and six of the Assistants, at least to be seven, shall have, and are hereby given and

granted unto them, full power and authority, from time to time, and at all times hereafter, to appoint, alter and change, such days, times and places of meeting and General Assembly, as they shall think fit ; and to choose, nominate and appoint, such and so many other persons as they shall think fit, and shall be willing to accept the same, to be free of the said Company and body politic, and them into the same to admit."

By the above quotation, it will be seen that there was no other qualification prescribed for a freeman or voter, than his admission as such, by those who were freemen or voters already. As they were to admit those whom they might think proper, it followed of course that they were at liberty, if they saw fit, to prescribe an uniform qualification to entitle a man to be admitted free, and to exclude all others ; and this right was conceded to them as one of the essential rights of a body corporate. No doubt, at that period, and long after, nearly every member of the community was a freeholder ; and it was not till a long period after the charter was granted, that the freehold qualification was required by law, to entitle a man to be "admitted free of said company." And very probably that law was enacted as a necessary measure of safety, in consequence of the influx of emigrants from abroad, whom, without responsibility, and without character, mere itinerant fortune hunters, it was deemed unsafe to admit to a participation in the affairs of the government. However this may have been, and

whoever may have considered himself outraged by being thus deprived of the right of suffrage, there cannot be the shadow of a doubt, that a very large majority of the people of the colony were freeholders at the time, and, in accordance even with the doctrine of the present day, had the right to govern, till they were outnumbered.

But the American Revolution opened a new era. The royal authority over the colony, was repudiated, and Rhode Island became a free, sovereign, and independent state. Most of the other states proceeded to make and adopt constitutions of government, as they had the right to do. But Rhode Island continued, as she had the right also to do, under her colonial charter, changing only her title, from colony, to state, and modifying her laws. I say Rhode Island had the right to do this, because a majority of the people appear to have preferred it, and the minority to have acquiesced in it. And this fact is evident, because no attempt at a change was made. It is also certain, on the other hand, that the question was not put to the people of the state, whether they would continue under the old form of government, or institute a new one; at least there is no record of such a procedure now in existence, and no recollection of such an one is preserved. It is not the business of the writer to determine whether the course pursued was in itself right or wrong—whether the non-freeholder had or not the right to demand a constitution, and a privilege to exercise the elective franchise. It would seem that no such demand was made, and as those who possess the

political power seldom relinquish it of their own accord, the landholders still retained it unquestioned, and continued the exercise of the governmental powers under the original system, as though no other change had occurred, except that of transferring the sovereignty from the crown of Great Britain, to the freeholders of Rhode Island. Thus the form and principles of government established by virtue of the royal prerogative, over a dependent colony, became by prescription or usage those of the sovereign state. With this government in operation, and without question or objection, Rhode Island became a member of the Federal Union, under the constitution which requires of the United States to guarantee to each State, a republican form of government. That this government was considered legitimate and republican by the Federal Government, there can be no doubt, because, under it, the state was admitted into the Union. That the people of the state so considered it, must be taken for granted, because they did not protest against it at the time, and submitted to it without complaint. That the law of suffrage, and the representative apportionment, had become somewhat unequal and illiberal at the time, there can be no doubt, nor is it more questionable that the inequality has increased. Still, as it is conceded that the majority must govern, the minority, if they felt aggrieved, had no other means of redress than to await the change of public opinion in their favor ; and, meantime the government under the charter being sustained by the major portion of the people, was as fully binding on the minority as though it had been

adopted by the unanimous voice of the entire population of the state.

Times and circumstances, have, however, in some respects, undergone a change. For nearly forty years past, a portion of the people of the state have been restless and uneasy under the laws which denied them the right of franchise. No direct measure however, it is believed, was adopted to effect a change in their favor, till the year, 1811, when a bill was introduced into the State Senate, for this purpose. This was a strict party movement. In the spring of that year, the Republican party had elected the Governor, Lt. Governor, and Senate, and a majority of the members of the other House. At the June session of that year, a bill was prepared for an extension of suffrage ; and arrangements were made to carry it through.* By some means however, it was not presented. At the October session following, the Federal party had obtained the ascendancy in the House, and in which body the bill was defeated after it had passed the Senate. Thus ended the first serious attempt by legislative means, to extend the elective franchise to the non-freeholders. The subject was subsequently revived, and occasionally discussed by the citizens among themselves, and also at times in the columns of the public papers. Little or nothing however appears to have been done, until the year 1824 ; when a convention was directed, by the General Assembly, to be called for the purpose of forming a written constitution of State Government. The Delegates to that body were elected by the freemen, or qualified voters,

* See Appendix.

including only freeholders and their eldest sons. The body convened June 21, 1824 ; and closed its labors and adjourned on the 30th of the same month.

The great complaint by a portion of the freemen, especially of Providence county, against the existing form of government, then, as now, was the inequality of the Representation in the Lower House of the Assembly. The same apportionment had been continued from the date of the colonial charter, nearly one hundred and fifty years. It had no regard to the future increase of population, or change of circumstances ; but, by an arbitrary rule, gave to each town its number of Representatives, without the authority to effect a change, in all time to come. That rule, at the time it was first adopted, was probably very nearly correct in principle. It gave to Newport, then the commercial emporium of the colony, six Representatives ; and to Providence, then a secondary village, four. To Warwick and Portsmouth it also gave four, each, and to each other town, two. But, in process of time a great change had taken place as to population. In 1824, the population of Providence was more than double that of Newport. Many towns entitled by the charter, to two Representatives each, had acquired a population more than double the number in Portsmouth which sent four ; and three times as great as some, and four or five times as great as others, which also sent two each. So great in fact had the inequality become, that the county of Providence, furnishing but twenty-two Representatives out of seventy-two, included ten towns out of thirty-one, and three-fifths of

the entire population of the State. The convention framed and gave out a constitution designed measurably to correct this alleged evil. It provided that each town having 3,000 inhabitants, and less than 5,000, should elect three Representatives. That each town having 5,000, and less than 8,000 should elect 4 — That each town having 8,000 and less than 12,000, should elect 5 — That each town having 12,000, and under 17,000 should elect 7 — And that no town should send less than two Representatives, nor more than seven. The freehold qualification was retained, which requires the ownership of real estate to the value of one hundred and thirty-four dollars, or of the annual value of seven dollars ; and the right of franchise of the eldest son without the freehold qualifications, was cut off.

In most of the towns, if not all, whose representation was to be unfavorably affected by the proposed change, there was a very strong opposition to it ; so that, out of the twenty-one towns in all but Providence county, only three gave a majority for it ; and they were Bristol and Warren, which would have gained by it, and Barrington, which it would not have affected. Foster and Scituate, Cranston and Burrillville, all in the county of Providence, also gave heavy majorities against it, partly perhaps from a reluctance common to a large body of the freemen, to any innovation on the old system, and partly from jealousy of the influence of the city of Providence.

From these causes, and probably in part from others, the constitution was rejected by a comparatively large

majority, as appears by the official returns ; which for reference, we give below.

	Yes.	No.		Yes.	No.
Newport,	5	531	Charlestown,	000	75
Providence,	653	26	Glocester,	85	30
Portsmouth,	000	183	West Greenwich,	1	173
Warwick,	67	160	Coventry,	71	195
Westerly,	12	68	Exeter,	000	114
New Shoreham,	2	49	Middletown,	2	96
North Kingstown,	6	207	Bristol,	100	24
South Kingstown,	47	100	Tiverton,	13	96
East Greenwich,	30	80	Little Compton,	6	91
Jamestown,	6	16	Warren,	57	28
Smithfield,	128	18	Cumberland,	140	14
Scituate,	18	234	Richmond,	000	90
Cranston,	36	52	Johnston,	58	13
Hopkinton,	5	69	North Providence,	64	10
Barrington,	21	12	Foster,	4	232
Burrillville,	27	37			

Total — for the constitution, 1668 — Against it, 3,206 — making a majority against it, of 1538 votes. The vote, it will be seen, is small, and probably not one half as large as might have been cast. The question however was not to be put to rest by such means. But a short period had elapsed after the quietus had been given to the constitution of 1824, before the subject was again brought up ; or rather before the flame which had only been partially smothered, broke out afresh. It would be of but little interest to the reader to trace the progress of excitement from month to month, or from year to year, and to enter into the details of particular movements among the people at a period so long gone by, in connexion with this subject ; suffice it to say ; for the succeeding five years, up to

1829, the object was kept steadily in view, and, among a portion of the people, with a determination never to recede from the ground, till that object should be accomplished. From the following reports of the General Assembly, copied from the Providence Journal, some opinion may be formed of the state of the question at that period. At the May session of that year, the report says — “Several memorials on the subject of extending the right of suffrage, were received, and referred to a Committee to report thereon at the June Session. The committee was composed of Messrs. B. Hazard, Haile, Wilbur, Thurston, and Rhodes.” Thus the matter rested till the June Session ; when, on Saturday the 27th of that month, the report says ; — “The subject of the memorials and petitions for the extension of suffrage, was called up. Mr. Hazard from the committee, to whom they had been referred, reported adversely to extending the right. Mr. Howe moved to continue the subject to the next session, but withdrew his motion before the question was taken. On motion of Mr. Updike, the petitioners were allowed to withdraw their petitions.” By way of comment, the reporter adds — “Thus died without a struggle, a subject which has created so much excitement in our State.” — A comment which, as respected merely the petitions thus summarily rejected, was true enough ; but which, as related to the future, was subsequently falsified by events in a very short period of time.

We ought perhaps, in this place, to pause a moment, for reflection on the state of public feeling at that

period, and the peculiar character of the legislative action on the subject, and which becomes absolutely necessary, in order to appreciate the merits of the subsequent controversies on the subject in dispute.

CHAPTER III.

It will be seen by the brief references in the preceding pages, that, however the subject of extending the right of suffrage may have been discussed and treated in the community, the General Assembly, or at least the House of Representatives, was disposed to treat the matter with very little ceremony or consideration. The petitions and memorials presented to the House from time to time, invariably received their death-blow in that body; and therefore never reached the Senate. Consequently, as they failed by that means to find a place among the records of the state, it would be impossible to ascertain how numerous were the signatures appended to them. As far however as is now known, the number has been at no time large, and has, in all cases, presented but a small proportion of the male population of the State twenty-one years of age and upwards, and but few indeed of the qualified voters. This is one reason why the Legislature continued to treat the subject with neglect. That body naturally formed the conclusion that, if a majority of the people of the state were dissatisfied with the existing laws relative to the elective franchise, they

would not be backward in presenting themselves, by memorial, before that body ; and the inference from the fact that they did not, was, that the disaffected constituted but a small minority. In the second place the Legislature, and the Landholders in general, with here and there an exception, considered the original charter of Charles 2d. as an act of incorporation giving to the freemen of the State, and their successors, a perpetual existence as a body corporate, with powers which could not be impaired without their own consent. Consequently, a portion at least appear to have arrived at the conclusion, that it was an act of impertinence in non-freeholders, even to petition for the right of suffrage. And it is a fact that every attempt to call a convention, or to modify the election laws, was made in consequence of resolutions offered by members of the Assembly, and not in compliance with the prayers of petitions and memorials.

During the whole controversy, for more than a quarter of a century, the portion of the people of the state opposed to an extension of the elective franchise, planted themselves firmly on the ground of chartered rights, denying the doctrine of the natural right of any man to participate in the affairs of government, and utterly disclaiming the doctrine, that the non freeholder acquired any other rights by the revolution which severed this country from Great Britain, than those vouchsafed to him by the British Monarch, under the charter. This party maintained the doctrine that the right of suffrage was a social and acquired right ; emanating from the conditions of the original

compact of the body corporate and politic ; that that body alone had the authority to modify or change it, and that no others could of right become members with them, and parties to the compact, or be endowed with the privileges of freemen, without their consent. When complaint was made by those who were denied the right of suffrage, they were told that the qualification demanded by law was of trifling amount, that the safety of the state required the voter to possess an interest in the soil, and that those who did not like the condition, were not compelled to remain under the state jurisdiction.

On the other hand, the argument has been, that, though previous to the revolution the political power vested, under the Charter, in the Company alone, yet that the revolution destroyed the colonial government, annulled the Charter, and resolved society into its original elements : — That natural right and natural equality were restored : — That the Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution of the United States, recognised and enforced the same doctrine : — That every free citizen was entitled to the elective franchise : — And that the State would be as safe under the operation of such a system, as though the right to vote was coupled with an interest in the soil.

The foregoing is, to be sure, but a bird's-eye view of the arguments advanced on either side of this question, but it presents the general outlines ; and any one of common reflection, may readily discover the tendencies of the whole. These texts have served as the subjects of discussion for more than

twenty years ; during which period, oceans of ink have been shed, and scores of speeches made, to establish, first one side, and then the other.

CHAPTER IV.

THE question of Suffrage was not suffered to slumber for a great length of time, after its fancied strangulation in 1829. About the year 1833, or possibly some time in 1832, immediately after the Presidential election, the subject was again resuscitated. The question was brought up anew in the city of Providence, at first by a small number of persons mostly mechanics, and nearly, if not all, non-freeholders. The Town House was put in requisition, and weekly meetings were held, and well attended, and speeches made on the great question. These meetings were generally addressed by mechanics and working-men, in set speeches, which exhibited very considerable talent ; and though often pretty highly spiced with satire and sarcasm, afforded evidence that those who delivered them had felt much, and thought much, if they had not learned much. It was fashionable then, as well as now, to give to the land-holders the appellation of aristocrats and ruffled-shirt gentry ; and the speakers and their associates prided themselves in occupying an opposite standing. Hence, they frequently appeared in the desk, at least some of them, arrayed in green baize jackets, to address the audi-

ence; and to illustrate the feeling still farther, in a correspondence with Hon. John Q. Adams, and Hon. Francis Baylies, in May, 1833, the committee of correspondence designate themselves as follows:—
WILLIAM I. TILLINGHAST, Barber — **LAWRENCE RICHARDS, Blacksmith** — **WM. MITCHELL, Shoemaker** — **SETH LUTHER, House Carpenter** — **WM. MILLER, Currier** — **DAVID BROWN, Watch and Clock Maker.** This fact is of no farther importance, than merely to show the feeling that actuated the persons engaged at first in the attempt at that time, to obtain an extension of suffrage. But very few freeholders united with the party, and the mode of action was, to operate on public feeling and opinion. Subsequently, however, several of the members of the bar united themselves with the party; among whom, was Thomas W. Dorr; and the affair assumed a new aspect.

In May, 1833, a circular was issued by the party, which had been adopted in a public meeting, and signed, **SETH LUTHER, Chairman**, and **WILLIAM I. TILLINGHAST, Secretary.** The doctrine set forth in this document, as that of the party, was, free suffrage. An explanation of the phrase however was given, as they understood it, not as unconditional universal suffrage, but such as is designated in the Constitution of Massachusetts:—That American citizens should be allowed to vote on condition of a specific residence in the State, and the payment of taxes. In the same year, a petition was presented to the General Assembly, from Charles Randall and others in the town of Warren, in accordance with the doctrine

of the above circular, which was referred to a select committee, and which, at a subsequent session, met with the same fate as its predecessors had done in the year 1829. But the result was different. The party had now been organized; and though not as yet strong either in numbers or energies, it had acquired a hold on life, from which it was not to be shaken by the unfavorable decision of a legislative committee.

Not long after the above period, in the spring of 1834, and after Mr. Dorr had taken the field, it was determined to make preparation for a State Convention, the object of which was to confer together, and to draw up, and to lay before the people, the outlines of a constitution. It was also determined to make an appeal through the ballot-box. The convention was called. It assembled and acted. And the provisions relative to representation and the elective franchise recommended by that body, were similar to those which had been put forth by the party. The appeal to the ballot-box of course failed; but from time to time the effort was continued, until the summer of 1837; when the Constitutional Party, as it was then called, brought out a number of votes somewhat less than seven hundred. This was the last expiring effort, and with its failure, terminated the existence of the party. It is not however to be understood that the cause for which the constitutionalists contended, had lost ground, or that the friends of a constitution and an extension of suffrage had yielded their opinions, or diminished in number. The contrary is the fact; and, from 1833 to 1837, greater

advances had been made towards the accomplishment of the object, than had been made in twenty years before. But it was a period of high political excitement. Most of the active members of the Constitutional Party were also members of one or the other of the two political parties of the day. The success of the constitutionalists, if not highly doubtful, appeared very remote, and political considerations demanded immediate action. For these reasons, many members of the party could not be prevailed on to vote for the constitutional candidates, and went to the polls and voted for others. And thus was the party disbanded in 1837, at a period when, strange as it may appear, it had probably increased threefold, if not fourfold, in numbers, talents, and moral energy, in the short space of four years.

During the period to which we have alluded above, the General Assembly had not been idle. That body kept its eye on the current of events, and, for some reason, at their June session, 1834, adopted a resolution to call a convention to amend the Charter or make a constitution. Mr. Dorr, who was then a member of the House, proposed an amendment to the resolution, by which all native resident citizens of the State who had, within the year, paid a tax on the amount of one hundred and thirty-four dollars of real or personal estate, should be allowed to vote for delegates to the convention. The amendment was subjected to the ordeal of a long debate, and was finally rejected; only *four* members voting for the amendment, and fifty-eight against it. The four who voted

for it, were, Thomas W. Dorr, of Providence, Levi Haile, [now on the bench of the Supreme Court] of Warren, Otis Mason, of Cumberland, and John H. Weeden, of North Providence. The convention was ordered to meet at Providence on the first day of September, 1834; and the delegates to constitute the body, were elected at the regular town meetings in August previous.

It is unpleasant to question the sincerity even of an individual; and much more so to doubt the good faith of a solemn deliberative body. But, as a faithful historian, we are bound to state honest convictions, be they what they may. The General Assembly, in this instance, gave too much reason for the inference which many drew from their conduct on the occasion, that the call for a convention was a sham movement designed to amuse that portion of the citizens of the state, who were loud in their demands for a constitution and an extension of suffrage. Much of the language uttered in debate was of a bitter, sarcastic, and contemptuous character; and manifested a disposition on the part of the speakers, to resist, at all hazards, every attempt to meet the wishes of those who thought themselves aggrieved, and who demanded redress. To crown the whole, the members of the convention were required to *serve without pay*; a measure which every one was confident would either prevent the holding of a convention at all, or constitute one, of a class of men who would do nothing when they should assemble. But, contrary to the expectations of many, the body, or at least a quorum, did assemble at the

time appointed. They drew up, and nearly completed a constitution, in which, however, instead of extending the right of suffrage, they secured the old system by stronger guards. The convention held together for two weeks; but during the second week, found itself in a quick consumption by a rapid diminution of numbers, and finally, for the *want of a quorum*, adjourned to meet again on the second day of November following. In the interim, the body died a natural death, and was never resuscitated. And thus the affair ended. In this convention, seven towns out of thirty-one, were unrepresented — viz : — Scituate, Foster, Barrington, West Greenwich, Richmond, New Shoreham, and Charlestown.

Affairs remained in this posture, till the January session of the General Assembly, 1836. At that session, the law relating to the elective franchise was remodelled. No change however was made in the principle, and the old qualifications were retained. The only object attempted to be gained, was to guard the polls more effectually against frauds.

On this occasion, two attempts were made to modify the voting qualification. Mr. Luther, of Warren, a firm and undeviating friend of an extension of suffrage, moved an amendment to admit to the right to vote at elections, persons who paid a tax on any species of property of the value of \$250. Messrs. Luther and Dorr were the only persons who voted for it.

Mr. Dorr moved another amendment, by which a man's real estate might qualify as many of his sons

“as there were times \$134 in the value of the said estate.” The same two members only, voted for that.

It is not to be inferred from this, however, that these two persons were the only members of the Assembly who favored an extension of suffrage. There were others; but some thought, no doubt, that such amendments would be of little or no utility, and others, as has long, if not always, been the case, thought, the representatives had no right to change the qualification required as a condition for the exercise of the elective franchise, without express instructions to that effect from their constituents.

CHAPTER V.

After the dispersion of the Constitutional Party in 1837, little was heard on the suffrage question, for some time. The bank question, the monetary concerns of the country, and the questions of state and national politics, absorbed, or at least obscured, all other subjects; and the suffrage question in Rhode Island, shared the common fate, and was, for a time, swallowed up in the vortex. But it was not dead. The flame had only been smothered, and awaited but the favorable moment to burst out afresh, and to burn with renewed vigor. In February, 1840, the subject was again-called up by a few men without wealth,

with no pretensions to learning, in the usual acceptation of the term, with little or no popular influence, and without any apparent preconcerted measures, or mode of action. In fact, the question was of that character, and the object one which a portion of the people had so long cherished with the most devoted zeal and attachment, that it needed none of these embellishments to give it currency, and to press it with renewed energy. The first meeting was composed of less than twenty persons, of the description already named. They determined to move onward, and took every precaution to avoid an entanglement with the political parties of the day; a determination which, had it been religiously adhered to, would have placed the Suffrage Party on a more elevated and successful ground than they now occupy. The meetings were continued from week to week, and the attendants rapidly increased in numbers. Still, leading politicians, and freeholders, generally, stood aloof, and for a long time the party consisted almost entirely of mechanics and workingmen, in the humbler walks of life. After having, as was thought, obtained sufficient strength to take the field, and to commence operations, it was determined to embody the party, then confined to the city of Providence as far as visible identity was concerned, into a regularly constituted society, or association. Accordingly, a committee was appointed to concert measures for that purpose; who, at a very full meeting held on the evening of March 27, 1840, reported a "PREAMBLE AND CONSTITUTION OF THE RHODE ISLAND SUFFRAGE ASSOCIATION."

The document was unanimously adopted. A question then arose, as to whom the Association would accept as American citizens within the limits of their intentions as to an extension of suffrage. And after considerable debate on the subject, it was finally concluded to receive as members, only *Native born white male citizens of the United States*. Thus, the Association established it at the commencement of their existence, that the object they had in view, was, "a liberal *extension* of suffrage to the *native white* male citizens of the United States, resident in Rhode Island. Free Suffrage, more properly universal suffrage, was very generally repudiated by them, either on the ground of expediency, policy, or principle, though it is true that some advocated and insisted on it. The "Preamble and Constitution" was very numerously signed, the Association was organized under it, and the meetings continued till some time in the summer of that year; when it was concluded to postpone farther operations till Autumn. Meantime the heated contest for the Presidential chair came on; and to avoid the interference of political party politics with the suffrage question, operations were still farther suspended, till after the heat of the political warfare should have passed away. It was not till some time in November of that year, that, the suffrage association again took the field.

Hitherto great pains were taken to guard against all party political influences; and, on the part of many, the desire to do so still continued; but it is about as easy to escape the contagion of the Plague in an

infected house, as the *kindness*, the *sympathy*, and the *aid*, of high toned politicians, when they fancy they can make any thing out of you. Accordingly after the fate of certain men had been decided by the election of 1840, and they had found themselves disencumbered of the affairs of state, they came to the conclusion that the suffrage cause would afford them a very convenient hobby, ready saddled and bridled; and by mounting which, though nothing could be lost, something might be gained. And it would be a very interesting and edifying work, would our limited space admit of it, to relate the sudden and wonderful conversions which occurred in a few short months. To tell who, and how many, previously as tenacious of the landed qualification as the veriest aristocrat in the state, became all at once convinced that free suffrage was a necessary attribute of democracy, and that every one who denied the doctrine, must of necessity be a confirmed aristocrat, a foe to American liberty, and a decided opponent to any thing bearing the impress of Republican Equality. So wonderful was the change effected, that these new converts were perfectly astonished that the suffrage party should have stopped short of unconditional universal suffrage; and their wide spread sympathy, and extensive benevolence, could see no way by which a citizen of the United States, resident in Rhode Island, native or foreign born, except he wore a *colored skin*, could be rightfully excluded from the ballot box. That such perfectly pure patriots were entirely free from all interested motives, especially when they so declared themselves

it would be almost sacrilegious to doubt. One thing however is very certain. Most of them had ever been opposed to an extension of suffrage; and the party to which they belonged, had held the reins of government in their hands more than one half the time for twenty years, without ever, in the whole time, having made a single move to promote the object. Six of the seven towns which refused to send delegates to the Convention of 1834 were under the control of the same party; the same party had a decided majority in the House in 1836, when the election law was remodeled; an act emanating from the pen of a member of that party, and which was introduced into, and which passed in the House, before it went to the Senate. Furthermore, it is well known that a large majority of that party, up to the autumn of 1840, was opposed to an extension of suffrage; to say nothing of free suffrage; and yet, within some six months after the Presidential Election of that year, such a remarkable change of opinion occurred, that an extension of suffrage became a portion of their political belief; and in about a twelve month, free, unconditional, and universal suffrage, became the watch-word with most of them — I say unconditional — that is, except the skin of the citizen were *colored*.

No fault can be reasonably found with the party for having become converts to the suffrage cause. They had a perfect right to do so. Whether sincere, or otherwise, is a matter for them to settle. Had they followed up the plan laid out by the suffrage association, to act by means of petitions, memorials, and

appeals to the people, to the ballot box, and to the constituted authorities of the nation, all would have been well. But, as will be seen in the sequel, they preferred a different course.

By the spring of 1841, suffrage associations auxiliary to the parent body, had been formed in various parts of the state. On the 18th of April in that year, a very numerous mass meeting of the party was held in Providence. And on that occasion, several leaders of the democratic party mounted the badge of the association, for the first time identifying themselves with it, and showing themselves either in the procession or elsewhere in the streets. On the 5th of May following, a similar meeting was held at Newport. On that occasion, it was resolved that preparatory measures should be instituted for the call of a convention to form a constitution. A committee was accordingly appointed. On the 5th day of July following, another mass convention was held at Providence ; when the state committee was instructed to call a convention forthwith. We must now pause a moment in our course, to bring up another portion of our history, to the time of which we are speaking.

CHAPTER VI.

AT the January session of the General Assembly, 1841, a petition was presented from the town of

Smithfield, for an addition to her representation. The discussion on this subject brought up the whole question. That subject was postponed, with the understanding that, at a subsequent session, measures would be adopted to arrange the whole question, by convention, or in some other way. At the same session, a petition was presented, of an individual character, for a constitution, extension of suffrage, &c. In June, the same year, and *previous* to the 4th of July mass meeting at Providence, the Assembly resolved to call a convention, to amend the Charter, or to form a constitution. The design of those who had now foisted themselves on the Suffrage Party from the democratic party, as leaders, became apparent. It was, to step in between the Legislature, the convention called under the authority of that body, and the people : — To anticipate the doings of the convention : — To assume to themselves the character and authority of guardians of the people : — To erect a form of government to suit themselves, and to favor their purposes of individual and party ambition : — To establish it by numerical force — And thus to bring the legal authority to their feet. Accordingly, the State Committee came together on the 20th day of July, for the purpose for which they had received instructions from the mass convention at Providence, on the fifth.

And now we shall learn how the system was carried out, and on what principle. The General Assembly had directed that the delegates to the convention authorised by that body, should be elected on

the 31st day of August. The committee directed that the delegates to the People's Convention, as it was called, should be elected on the 28th of the same month ; three days previous. The convention authorised by the General Assembly in June, were ordered to meet on Monday, November 2, 1841. The People's Convention, so called, or the convention called by the State Committee, re-assembled by adjournment, November 16th, 1841 ; and completed their constitution, and gave it out to be voted on by the people, commencing December 27th, 1841, when they knew the other convention had adjourned to ascertain the wishes of the people, as they had declared, and were not to reassemble till Monday, February 14th, 1842. And the People's Convention assembled for the third time, on Wednesday, January 12th, 1842, and declared that their constitution had been adopted, and should be maintained, more than a month before the other convention held their second meeting to complete their labors. Thus the leaders of the Suffrage Party carried out their plans for taking precedence of the government and the convention called by it ; to supercede the action of those bodies, and to prevent the people from adopting and sustaining any constitution but their own. This, to say the least of it, was indecent haste ; and when the object is considered, it may be entitled to a worse appellation than that.

Early in the commencement of the campaign by the Suffrage Association, it had been tacitly adopted by the [members, though there was no official act of that purport, that, after having made use of memorials,

petitions, and the ballot-box, and found them unavailing, they would be fully justified, as a last resort, in the formation of a constitution and government independently of legislative action, and in instituting measures to test the validity of their claims, either in Congress, by the election of Representatives to claim seats in that body, or in the Supreme Court of the United States by the performance of some judicial act. That course was generally anticipated. When the State Committee met in July, 1841, they were reminded of this determination ; and, to some of the members of that body, out of doors, if not to the assembled body in conclave, it was distinctly stated and argued, that no memorial or petition had been presented by the Association, to the General Assembly : — That no appeal had been made to the ballot-box : — And that not a single pledge of the body had been redeemed. It was farther stated and argued, that whatever right the people might eventually have to act in their primary sovereign capacity, no such right of action could exist, while a convention was actually in existence, and about to proceed to the discharge of their duties, which, for ought that was then known, might result in the satisfactory adjustment of the great question at issue. The doctrine was enforced, that no body of men, however numerous and powerful, had the right to ride over the laws to seek redress, until all probable peaceable means had been tried, not one of which had been put in requisition during the pendency of this question. The only reply was, that the Landholder's Convention would

do nothing to redress the grievances of the great body of the people, and that the committee were determined to interpose, to prevent them from doing any thing. Argument was in vain. The majority prevailed, and the work was commenced.

After the People's Convention had nearly completed the labors of their second session, they were warned on the same principles stated to the committee before, not to offer their constitution to the people for their action, until the Landholder's Convention should have consummated their labors. But argument was of as little avail with that body, as with the State Committee ; and they proceeded, with the determination to carry their points at all hazards ; and, as afterwards publicly resolved, by "*all NECESSARY means.*" The issue we have seen.

CHAPTER VII.

WHILE the above proceedings were going on, on the part of the People's Convention, the convention of the Landholders were pursuing the even tenor of their way. As before stated, that body assembled, as by law required, on the 2nd day of November, [the first was nominally the day of meeting] 1841, in the city of Providence. They proceeded to the execution of the duties assigned them ; and, after a good deal of debate on various propositions, drew up the

outlines of a constitution. It was seen by a large number of the members, that the period had arrived when liberal concessions must be made to the unenfranchised portion of the community ; as even a large proportion of the freeholders were now supposed to be in favor of such a course. Besides, a very respectable minority of that body were known to be in favor of an extension of suffrage, and the equalization of representation in the State. But the minority of the freemen were represented by a majority of delegates, and the prejudices, prepossessions, and interests of the southern portions of the State prevailed ; and the consequence was, that no change worth naming, was made at this session, in the system of suffrage. Nothing final was however then done ; and, in order to complete their labors in a manner to give general satisfaction if possible, the convention adjourned on the 13th of November, with the avowed intention of laying their doings before the people, and consulting their wishes. The outlines of the constitution were printed and distributed through the State.

During the recess, as has already been noticed, the People's Constitution had been completed, given out to the people, and declared by the convention which had framed it, to have been adopted by the people by a large majority ; including also a majority of the freemen or qualified voters under the law. The qualification for voters required by the People's Convention, may be seen by reference to their constitution, Art. 2, Sec. 1. The Landholder's Convention re-assembled by adjournment, as already stated, Feb. 14th,

1842. While among their constituents, at home, they had heard the suffrage and constitutional questions freely and fully discussed. They had also seen the result of the vote on the People's Constitution. And the convention came together the second time, fully satisfied that a radical change in the existing system was imperatively demanded and fully prepared to make it. Accordingly they set to work in earnest ; and, on Saturday, February 19th, 1842, completed the work of revising their constitution, in which, it will be seen by reference to Art. 2, Sec. 3, they determined to admit to the exercise of the right of suffrage, every American-born citizen, twenty-one years of age and upwards ; requiring, as the only qualification, a residence within the State and town, for a certain period. This constitution was immediately published ; and many thousand copies of it were promptly distributed in every portion of the State. It was ordered to be voted on by the people, on the 21st, 22d and 23rd days of March, 1842.

Previous to the election of delegates to the People's Convention, a system of lecturing had been adopted by the Suffrage Association. Regular meetings of the original body had been kept up for a long time in the city of Providence. They were held weekly on Friday evenings, at the Town House, and addressed from time to time, by various persons. At the period we have been speaking of above, the same, or a similar system, had been adopted in other places ; and lecturers were sent out from Providence in every direction, and constantly employed. These lecturers

were, or at least most of them, men possessed of the talent for addressing a popular assembly, above mediocrity. But their minds were comparatively untrained and undisciplined, in relation to the important question at issue. They had thought, but had not studied ; and when they attempted to enlighten the minds of others, they wielded the weapons of irony, sarcasm, and invective, alternately to excite ridicule, or merriment, or to inflame the passions. Particularly after political partizans had obtained the partial control of affairs, the great object appeared to be, to carry the citadel by storm ; and that was only to be done by presenting the landholders as aristocrats, and the foes of human liberty, and holding them up to view as objects of detestation. With the materials to operate and the implements to operate with, but little effort was necessary, especially when aided by political partizan animosity, to create a spirit of deadly hostility in an assembled throng ; and arms, and blood, and threats of vengeance soon became as familiar, even in public meetings, as household words.

When the Landholder's Constitution was given out to the people, it became a question among the opposite party, whether they should take the field and attempt to prevent its adoption, or stand aloof and take no part in the contest. Thomas W. Dorr, who had now become one of the most active managers in the party, was in favor of the latter course. He insisted that the People's Constitution had become the paramount law of the land ; and that its friends should refuse to have any thing to do with the other, as by even voting

against it, they would, in some sense, recognize the paramount authority of the convention which framed it. With him, a great many others agreed ; and some of them boldly declared that they would sooner shoulder their muskets, and wade knee deep in blood, than submit to such a measure. There were others who thought best to take the field against the Landholders' Constitution and to vote it down, in order to have it entirely out of the way, that the party might have a clear stage for action. Others again who had voted for the People's Constitution, as a mere expression of opinion, and who held themselves at perfect liberty to act on the Landholder's Constitution as they might deem proper, took no counsel of either of the two factions in the Suffrage Party, and determined to follow the dictates of their own judgment.

After considerable deliberation on the subject, the voting policy prevailed ; and it was determined to make all due preparation to attack the landholders at the polls, and to ensure their defeat. The plans were soon laid, and all the necessary machinery put in operation to carry them out. The lecturers schooled themselves anew ; and now turned their arms against the new constitution ; leaving the old charter, the former goblin of the party, to a temporary slumber and repose. Mr. Dorr led on the attack, with the publication of his thirty reasons, or more, against the constitution ; some of which were good and substantial, and others of which, were quite as fatal to his own constitution, as to this. These reasons became the text book of the itinerant lecturers ; and they were

handled, and turned, and twisted, and metamorphosed, into as many shapes, and with as much adroitness, to suit purposes, and times, and places, as any passage of sacred writ that ever had the misfortune to fall into the hands of one of Cromwell's Roundheads. To give a practical illustration of this fact, we will advert to one simple expedient, which no doubt changed votes enough to defeat the constitution. True, it does not speak very loudly for the honesty of the lecturers, nor the intelligence of the people who were deceived by them. But, be that as it may, it is nevertheless true to the letter ; and may serve to show what some men can do with some other men, when some are dishonest, and some others ignorant.

The State of Rhode Island is of small extent, and so situated that, from all parts of it, people are in the habit of visiting those parts bordering on the ocean, or skirted by bays and rivers, for the purpose of pleasure excursions, as well as many for profit, and taking shellfish, and scale fish, with which our shores and waters abound. This is considered a great privilege, and is highly valued by our citizens. In order that the constitution should curtail no right or privilege the inhabitants enjoyed before, the framers of the constitution inserted the following — Art. 1, Sec. 13. "The citizens shall continue to enjoy, and freely to exercise the rights of fishery, and all other rights to which they have heretofore been entitled under the charter of this state, except as is herein otherwise provided." From the last clause of the section, "except as herein otherwise provided," many were persuaded to believe they

were cut off from the rights of fishery, though the constitution contained not another syllable on the subject ; and many others, not dreaming that a shellfish was a *fish*, supposed the constitution prohibited them from abstracting a clam from its gravelly resting place, except it were located on their own premises ! The majority against the constitution was but about seven hundred, and no doubt enough were induced to vote against it on the above weighty consideration, to have turned the scale the other way, had they been left to act without interference on the subject of the fishery. Other influences equally unfounded in truth were brought to bear by the party, and the constitution was lost.

If the Suffrage Party acted from honest motives, and no doubt a very large proportion of them did, no fault can be found with them, or at least no blame can be attached to them, for using all honest means to procure the rejection of a constitution they disliked.

By reference to the constitution, it will also be seen, that a landed qualification was demanded of naturalized foreigners, and a longer residence in the state than was required for native born American citizens. This constituted one of the great objections on the part of the Suffrage Party, who contended that, according to the constitution of the United States, the state had no right to make a difference between a native and naturalized citizen. The government party contended that the United States constitution did not touch the subject — That the state had the right to receive or reject whom it pleased, from abroad — And

the free admission of naturalized foreigners to the ballot-box, would prove detrimental to the interests of the state.

But there are many things connected with this affair, which we are bound to notice in this place ; and having done which, the reader will be left to make up judgment for himself.

CHAPTER VIII.

THAT the freeholders of the state had long and determinately opposed all attempts at innovation on the ancient system of government, has already been seen. That the operation of the suffrage laws, and the unequal representative system, had become an actual hardship and grievance to a large body of respectable non-freeholders, and to the northern portion of the state, is not to be denied.

The question is, had the crisis arrived, when after the application and failure of all legal and peaceable means, the people were compelled either to submit forever to the operation of arbitrary and tyrannical laws, or to seek redress by means of their own choice. This point is an all important one in the present controversy, and should be correctly understood. The reader therefore is respectfully solicited to give it particular attention.

It will be acknowledged on all hands, that nothing but necessity can justify a majority however great in

pursuing revolutionary measures ; and that necessity, as we have intimated in the commencement, is not created by oppression, but by the final refusal of the government to remove that oppression, after the proper application, through all the usual modes of approaching the legislative body. Such applications, as has been already stated, had been several times made ; and the demand as often refused to be granted ; and too often in a discourteous manner. But the government, with at least a show of reason, always sheltered itself behind the fact, that the petitions, memorials, &c. bore the names of but very few indeed of the legal voters of the state, and only an extremely small minority of the whole people. True or false therefore as the supposition may have been in itself, it must be confessed that the inference was warranted by the circumstances, that the opposition to the existing system found a place only in the breasts of a few, while the great body of the people were satisfied with it. On this ground therefore, as well as on the ground of corporate rights, and of prescription, the General Assembly rested. And on this ground also, not only that body, but the conventions, refused to extend suffrage.

In this posture, and without any attempt at revolution, affairs remained up to March, 1840, when the suffrage association was formed. They begun *de novo* ; and laid down a plan of operations perfectly legal, and embracing all the proper peaceable means to obtain redress of grievances. These failing, it was the common understanding among the members, that

an appeal was to be made to the last resort, on the plea of necessity. Had that course been pursued, the affair would have assumed a different aspect from what it now presents. The preamble to the constitution of that body, has the following declaration.

“God helping, we solemnly pledge ourselves, independently of all the political parties and principles of the day, except the great principles of American freedom, steadily to pursue our object till our purpose shall have been accomplished, and we find ourselves reinstated in the rights which heaven bequeathed us, and which the American Constitution guarantees.”

In accordance with this language, the association appeal to Heaven for the justice of their cause; and then say,

“Next, to the whole people of Rhode Island, to aid our efforts through the medium of the ballot box.”

This appeal was never made; and thus one peaceable mode of redress was omitted.

The association then say, “Next, to the General Assembly of the state, to do us justice,”—And that appeal was never made; for no petition, memorial, or remonstrance, of the association, was ever presented to the General Assembly; and no effort directed to that object, was ever made by them. The only petitions to the Assembly, on the subjects of suffrage and representation, presented during the whole controversy, was the petition of the town of Smithfield, already noticed, and several from Elisha Dillingham and 579 others for a constitution, &c. [See Appendix] With the former, the association had nothing to do;

and the latter, they disclaimed and repudiated. Thus the second and most essential of the peaceable modes of seeking redress of grievances by law, was omitted and condemned, and the solemn pledge of the association violated.

The petition of Dillingham was presented at the January session of the Assembly, previous to the Suffrage Mass Meeting at Newport, 1841; while the Smithfield petition was still pending, in reference to which, it was generally anticipated that some legislative action would be had, in order to effect a legal change in the system of State government. It is equally worthy of note, that, with these indications, the mass meeting convened in May, hastened to appoint a State Committee, with powers to call a convention to frame a constitution. And that the same committee was instructed to *call a convention after* the Assembly had issued a call for a similar body. The remainder of the proceedings of that committee and its convention, we have already noticed. The reader will very naturally inquire, where is the proof in all this history of proceedings, of the necessity of revolution on the part of the suffrage party, seeing a legal constitutional convention had already been called? Why not await the result? Then there might have been a greater show of necessity for the independent action of the people. The reader has the facts, and must make his own comments. We will however state the reasons assigned by the suffrage party themselves, at the time.

One reason assigned, was, that, petition after petit-

ion had been before presented to the Legislature, and unceremoniously rejected; and as that body had hitherto spurned all overtures of that description, it was taken for granted that they would still continue to do so; and that nothing was to be hoped for from that quarter. Therefore the party refused to apply. They seem to have forgotten that their movements had no connexion with former ones:—That they had commenced the work anew, which made it their duty to go over the whole ground, as much as though it had never been trodden before:—And that, in refusing to do so, they violated their own solemn pledge given at first. Nor did they appear to recollect that, since 1836, a great change might have occurred, and actually had occurred, in public opinion and feeling; and that the subject on which they were engaged, was then before the General Assembly, with a fair prospect of receiving proper attention; and which would have been rendered almost certain, had the petition of Dillingham and others, been backed up with others from all those in the State, favorable to a written constitution, and an extension of suffrage. Nor does it appear ever to have entered their minds that, even had the aggrieved party the right to seek redress by revolutionary means, the Legislature and the constituents of that body, had at least an equal right to be appealed to, and to be made acquainted with the views, wishes, and ultimate determination of the party, that they might have at least the opportunity to grant redress, and thus to prevent the necessity for the evils of revolution.

Another reason stated, was, that, if the work of forming a constitution was left to the Legislature and the Convention called by that body, probably if any thing was done, it would be some half-way affair, designed merely to satisfy a majority, and which, having been adopted by that majority, would deprive the minority of their rights, or rather withhold them.

Such were the principal reasons assigned most frequently ; but the true reason was, that a few ambitious men who had become the chief counsellors of the suffrage party, the master spirit among whom, was THOMAS W. DORR, had resolved to revolutionize the State, and to form a government to suit themselves. They had determined, and before the close of the final session of the Landholder's Convention so expressed themselves, that they would accept of no constitution from that body, not even if it were framed by their own convention. It was on that principle, and on that alone, that the suffrage party went against the Landholder's Constitution, without reference to its merits or demerits.

It is true the objection was made, that the General Assembly had refused to allow any but freeholders to vote for delegates—and also that the system of representation, was still unequal. The first of these objections of course, is idle ; because the constitution should have been judged and adopted or rejected, not with reference to the persons who made it, but on its own merits. The second objection had more weight ; but that' and all others had no effect except that the

constitution was not that made by the People's Convention, and was not given out by that body.

In all these proceedings, as in all other cases of heated partizan warfare, the great mass of the suffrage party acted under the impulse of excitement; and it is hazarding nothing, to say that many of them at least, were entirely unacquainted with the true objects of their leaders, or the rules and principles on which they acted.

CHAPTER IX.

WHEN men are clothed with the exclusive powers of government, it requires no very extensive knowledge of the philosophy of human nature, for any one to know that those powers are seldom relinquished without much reluctance. And except where force has been resorted to, such occurrences are rare indeed, unless under circumstances in which obedience must be rendered eventually to the force of public opinion and the demand of the popular will. The freeholders of Rhode Island found themselves in possession of the political and civil power of the State, and very naturally determined to retain it as long as possible. It is due however to the citizens of Providence county, to say that many of the freeholders, and for some years past, nearly if not quite a majority

of them, have been satisfied that a change more congenial to our democratic republican feelings must soon take place, and ought to be effected. But the freeholders of the southern portions of the State, have been slow to relinquish any of their old notions on the subject of the elective franchise. Generally speaking, without any regard to popular right or to the progress of liberal opinions, they have appeared determined never to recede. Claiming the right of the freeholder to rule, and pretending that no other man could safely be trusted with a participation in the affairs of government, they have had the folly to resist all attempts at change, with the apparent conviction that they would be able to stem the torrent of opposition, and to carry out the old system through all time. Holding in their hands the balance of political power, and being still farther strengthened by great numbers in the north, they steadily refused all concessions, till the period arrived, when it was found that concession was necessary to the safety of the State.

Even up to the close of the November session of the legal State Convention of 1841, the same course in the main, was pertinaciously adhered to, though it was clearly foreseen, from the state of public feeling at that time, that the ground could not be maintained. Some of the members of that convention, in favor of the old landed qualification, took lessons from the aspect of the times. They saw in the distance, and not very remote either, the storm that was gathering, and urged on others the propriety of yielding

to the force of circumstances, to promote the public peace and safety. But the attempt was futile ; and the convention separated as we have seen. Before that body re-assembled, as has been stated, the People's Constitution had been given out. It was assumed from statistical data, that the male population of the State, was about 23,000, of twenty-one years of age, and upwards. Of this number the People's State Convention reported that 13,164, had voted for their constitution, making a large majority of the whole ; and of this number, it was also reported, there was a majority of the freemen, or legally qualified voters of the State.

Though it was very generally doubted among the opponents of the People's Constitution, if these reports were any thing like correct, still making all due allowances, they exhibited an array with which the boldest among the friends of the Charter deemed it dangerous to contend ; and when the legal convention came together in February, 1842, they appear to have assembled with their minds fully made up, to remove from the altar of their political worship, the antiquated Charter, the idol of the Rhode Island landholder. Accordingly, the way thus prepared, it required but a short time to go through with the details of the new constitution. [See Appendix.] In that instrument, though the landed qualification was retained, yet the elective franchise was given to all native citizens, free of taxation ; provided they were 21 years of age, and resident two years in the State, and six months in the places where they claim-

ed to vote. This constitution, it was hoped, would satisfy all parties and quiet the State. But the sequel as we have learned, showed that hope to have been fallacious.

Several circumstances had already occurred, some of which have been narrated in the foregoing pages, to show that those who now controlled the Suffrage Association, now more properly speaking the Suffrage Party, had resolved to accept nothing at the hands of the legal convention. Had a peaceable issue of the question been desired by them, they would have awaited, as stated before, the action of the legal convention, which they did not. Even had they deemed it best, in such a case, to call a convention of their own, it would have been done with instructions to that body to draw up the main features which they wished to have embodied in a constitution and taken the sense of the people respecting them, by way of instruction to the legal convention; and then awaited the issue. Their ground of popular sovereignty, if it were tenable before, would have been equally so afterwards, had the legal convention refused to comply with the popular demand. But the tone of the party had been completely changed. Up to July 5th, 1841, they had disclaimed the doctrine of free suffrage, and confined their demands virtually, to an extension of suffrage to native citizens of the United States, resident in Rhode Island; and that on the condition of a tax qualification. Soon after the above period, to increase the strength of the party on a popular vote, they insisted on free suffrage, without

taxation, and including all naturalized foreigners. The latter they knew to be particularly obnoxious to the landed interest, and could make no calculation on its being carried out, except by force. Even many of their own party were decidedly opposed to it, and gave to it a reluctant assent, by way of compromise.

The call of a convention with imperative instructions to frame a constitution, and to give it out to the people, and the resolution of the convention to take the vote on it, and in case it should receive a majority of the twenty-three thousand, that it should "become the paramount law of the land," all showed the determination to submit to nothing, and receive nothing, at the hands of the constituted authorities of the State. Added to these strong indications, are the resolutions passed, from time to time, in Providence and elsewhere, by the party, and the flag displayed by the convention at its final session, which bore the inscription, "*The Constitution is adopted and SHALL BE MAINTAINED.*" The last of these acts occurred on the 12th of January, 1842, a month before the final session of the legal convention, and of course when there could be nothing but conjecture as to what that body would finally do. At the same time, a State convention was recommended, to meet on the 16th of February, 1842, for the selection of State officers under the new constitution. It is idle to attempt to evade any of these points, for they are matters of history, and form a portion of the records of the Suffrage Party. Whatever therefore the legal convention might do or not do, was of no manner of

importance to the party. The resolution was taken to carry the point by forcible revolution if necessary, without regard to consequences ; and that object was kept steadily in view. To the reader it is left to determine on a review of the circumstances here recounted, whether or no the necessity for revolution has yet been created.

CHAPTER X.

IN order to show how far the Suffrage Association had reason to complain of the constitution finally laid before the people of the State by the legal convention, let us now compare a portion of that instrument with the official 'DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES,' published in their organ, the NEW AGE, and the resolution explanatory of the same, as adopted at a full meeting of the body at Providence, Feb. 7, 1841. The resolutions, appended to the Declaration are as follows :

"Resolved, That the power of the State should be vested in the hands of the people, and that the people have a right, from time to time, to assemble together, either by themselves or their representatives, for the establishment of a republican form of government.

"Resolved, That whenever a majority of the citizens of this State, who are recognised as citizens of the United States, shall by their delegates in con-

vention assembled, draft a constitution, and the same shall be accepted by their constituents, it will then be to all intents and purposes the law of the State."

It was the doctrine of a large majority of the Association, that all should be allowed to vote for or against a constitution, though but few thought that any should be allowed under a constitution, unless they were taxed in some way for the support and protection of the State. As the above resolutions left the subject in a very indefinite state, and as the Association did not wish to be considered as advocating the doctrine of free suffrage, a resolution was offered by a member, and adopted; which is as follows;

"Resolved, That in the opinion of this Association, the two most important objects to be gained in the formation of a constitution, is equal representation and a liberal extension of suffrage. Therefore we are of opinion that to accomplish these objects, all who are interested should be allowed to participate in its formation."

An extension of suffrage has ever been, in this State, put in opposition to free suffrage. So the Association considered it when the above resolution was adopted; and so true is this, that, up to July, 1841, the subject of free and universal suffrage was prohibited from being discussed at the meetings. The Association then changed its ground. In respect to

voting for or against a constitution, the legal convention did not go quite as far as the Association's "declaration of principles." But in the provisions relative to the elective franchise, they established a more "*liberal* EXTENSION of *suffrage* than the "declaration of principles" claimed, or than the Association had ever ventured to advocate till after the great mass conventions, when a considerable portion of a political party had, as such, been incorporated into the body, and a new mode of action adopted.

On the ground of suffrage, then, it cannot be denied, that the legal convention, though the Assembly had been presented with no petition from the Association, and acted with reference only to public opinion, conceded more than that Association, had ever demanded before they had determined to have no constitution but one of their own making. On the subject of representation in the Lower House of the Assembly, it will be seen by reference to the two constitutions there is a difference ; yet, after all, that adopted by the legal convention, all things considered is quite as just as the other. The representation in the Senate is unequal ; and is the worst feature in the whole work. But these evils are, in the main, of no sort of importance ; because, as has been before noticed, the Suffrage Party, at least those who controlled the movements of the body, had determined that good or bad, it should not go into effect, and that the People's Constitution should be maintained. Objections were however made by them, and strenuous ones, to the Landholder's Constitution, on that ac-

count. The same objections were made by many others in the northern part of the State, of the opposite party ; and acting on those objections, some of the latter party voted against the constitution. Others voted for it as the best compromise that could be obtained at the time, though it is not to be denied that the concessions made by it to the southern agricultural counties, were greater than could have been justified on any other ground than the strong desire which prevailed, to restore peace and harmony to the State, by propitiating all parties even at a sacrifice. The attempt was made, but as has been seen, failed. The constitution was rejected by a majority of about 700 votes ; which majority was more than made up by persons opposed to the Suffrage Party, and some of whom were in favor of the Charter, and opposed to a constitution in any form, and others, as already hinted, from other causes. The Suffrage Party now proceeded on their course. They resolved anew to establish the People's Constitution, to use their own language, "by *all necessary means*." And, to leave nothing to uncertain conjecture as to the true intention of this language, the flag of the convention was displayed at all their weekly meetings in Providence, with the inscription "THE CONSTITUTION IS ADOPTED, AND SHALL BE MAINTAINED ;" and many of the speakers at those meetings freely discussed the subject of a resort to arms, and were cheered and applauded by their audience in a vociferous manner. They soon commenced a military enrollment, and organised companies in the several wards in Providence, which

armed themselves, and put themselves under a course of drilling, and almost nightly paraded the streets. Besides these, one entire chartered company, called the Independent Volunteers, espoused their cause, nearly the whole of the United Train of Artillery, a majority of the National Cadets, a large portion of the First Light Infantry, all in the city of Providence, and two or three small companies in some of the country towns.

Matters thus appeared to be drawing near to a crisis; but still, the most prominent men in what was now called the Landholders' Party, felt little or no alarm, although there was much excitement in the community, and many vague and undefined apprehensions of an ultimate collision. The public mind was in a state of fearful suspense, and looking forward to the termination of the affair, with intense anxiety. It was however the opinion of the better informed portion of the Landholders' Party, or as they now called themselves the "LAW AND ORDER PARTY," that there would be no collision:—That the Suffrage Party, at least the most responsible portion of it, would give back, after having reached a point beyond which they could not go without resort to violence, or the commission of a flagrant breach of law. And, in this way they amused themselves, and suffered themselves to be deceived, as we shall see hereafter, while the Suffrage Party were pursuing, step by step, and without any serious obstacle, the course they had marked out.

CHAPTER XI.

Immediately on the rejection of the Landholders' Constitution, it was agreed among all the prominent men in the party, as well as among the members of the party generally, that another attempt should be made as soon as practicable, consistent with the existing state of affairs, by means of another convention, to settle the question by putting out another constitution which should obviate the reasonable objections against the recent one, and render it more acceptable to the people. But as the Suffrage Party had declared that they would accept of no compromise, and would not accept even of their own constitution from the hands of the Landholders Convention and were determined to organize their government without reference to any authority but their own, it was deemed expedient to await a period, thought not to be very remote, when the excitement should have abated, and when affairs should have assumed an aspect that would afford an opportunity for more deliberate action. For these reasons, the General Assembly, which convened at Providence on the 28th day of March, 1842, to hold an extra session to ascertain and proclaim the result of the vote on the constitution, took no measures for the call of a convention. At that session, a committee was appointed to make a report on the subject. They accordingly arrayed in their report, what they supposed to be the main facts, and all of which, with some am-

plications and additions, have been or will be given in these pages. In their report, they speak of the determination of the Suffrage Party to yield nothing, and say "Such a spirit is beyond the reach of conciliation or compromise. Nothing can satisfy such men but a triumph over the law, and a prostration of the government to unhallowed purposes." Taking into view the previous resolution of the Suffrage Party that they would support their constitution "by all necessary means," and "repel force by force," the committee recommend prompt action on the part of the government, and call on all good citizens to array themselves on their side. The report concludes with a proposition to adopt resolutions which were appended. They called on the Governor to issue his proclamation exhorting the good people of the state to give no aid or countenance to the attempt to set up the new government;—to adopt such measures as in his opinion might be necessary, to execute the laws, and preserve the state from domestic violence:—And reported the act since called the Algerine Law, which will be found in the Appendix. These were all passed, with some few dissenting voices.

Of the Algerine Law, so called by the opposing party, every one can judge, on its perusal. That party of course unanimously condemned it, and it found but little favor with not a few of the supporters of the existing government. Its policy may be considered, in some respects, fairly questionable, as it served rather to exasperate than to reconcile. One point

calculated on however by its passage, was gained. It soon thinned out the number of candidates for office under the People's Constitution, made extremely difficult to fill with responsible persons, the vacancies thus occasioned, and drew off many from that party, who never having intended a resort to physical force, left when they found the government in earnest. The government party had calculated that, by means of this law, they would prevent farther proceedings under the People's Constitution, and bring the community generally into a state of feeling favorable to a settlement of the vexed question by means of another constitution. But the hope was vain, and affairs soon assumed a more serious aspect.

During the extra session, the members of the Assembly who favored the cause of the Suffrage Party, were on the alert, made various propositions, and strenuously and ably sustained them. Among them was one to put out the People's Constitution to be voted on a second time, and another for the existing government to abdicate, and to give place to the new one about to be formed. On the grounds already stated, that the Suffrage Party would not accept, by way of compromise, even their own constitution, and because the General Assembly was opposed to it, and determined not to yield, the former proposition was promptly rejected. The latter was spurned at as an indignity offered to the government. And thus, the extra session terminated; not forgetting however, that bill had been presented before the close, and promptly rejected, providing an extension of suffrage.

CHAPTER XII.

All the Legislative proceedings of the Assembly failed to retard the progress of the Suffrage Party. They had defined their course, and marked their object ; and boldly determined to pursue the former, till they had reached the latter. Accordingly, in due time, they filled all the vacancies in their mutilated ticket, which had been occasioned by the sweeping process of the "Algerine Law ;" and when the eventful 18th day of April, 1842, had arrived, on which their elections were to be held in accordance with a provision in their constitution, they found means to organise meetings in every town in the State, with one or two exceptions; and cast their votes for the various officers of State, counties, and towns, to organise their government. The preparation for that event commenced and progressed, as an ordinary occurrence. The seal of the state was copied, and a *fac simile* engraving procured. Orders, in the form of requests, were issued to the military in Providence and elsewhere, which adhered to the new government, to appear in the city on the third of May, to perform *escort* duty on the occasion of organising the new government. Meetings were held by the party, as usual, and the subject of an appeal to arms, in case the old government refused to resign in favor of the new one, was as fully and freely discussed, and as openly, as though the question of right had already been settled and the claims of the

new government fairly and fully recognised. Many persons gave back when these demonstrations were made, having no desire to resort to extremities; but the great body remained firm, and appeared to be ready to proceed onward, at all hazards.

The nature of the *escort* duty to be performed, was well understood to be a measure of defence at least; and from the hints dropped by many, and the plain declarations of others, the object in the collection of the force was supposed to be offensive. The subsequent declarations of Mr. Dorr, in his Proclamation as Governor of the state, justifies the conclusion that the force was called in, as far as he was concerned, for the double purpose of resisting any legal process, or military attack, on the part of the existing government, and of taking possession of the state property.

Many continued to believe that the government contemplated to be formed under the People's Constitution, would never be organised; but the adherents of that cause paid no heed to those surmises; and, except those who drew back on beholding the visage of war in the distance, kept up the din of preparation, and faltered not in their course. Their tone was as bold and confident as though they already wielded the reins of power; and what was to be done by the new government, and how affairs were to be managed, was promulgated with all possible assurance. Hitherto, the charter government had done nothing but resolve and re-resolve; and had not made a single advance by way of preparation for defence. The "Algerine Law" it is true stared the Suffrage

Party in the face, but it was laid inactive on the shelf while the government party stared at, and talked to each other, and compared notes, and left their opponents to manage their affairs in their own way, without molestation. At length however, it was found necessary, either to relinquish the government into the hands of Mr. Dorr and his associates; or to make preparations to sustain it. The military of the state, with the exception of some half dozen chartered companies, was in a complete state of disorganisation, and even a portion of them, as before said, sided with the new government. In this emergency, Gov. King decided to call on the President of the United States for aid. The requisition was made through a commission which proceeded directly to the seat of the national government. The reply returned by the President was prompt, and measurably decided in its tone, though not what was expected by many. Being too lengthy for insertion within our narrow limits, we can only sketch its material points.

The President considered the expression of opinion on the question at issue in the state, as out of his province; it being in his view, a question of Municipal regulation, which the state must settle for itself, and with which the general government could have nothing to do. For himself, he recognised the existing government of the state, and considered it his duty to interfere to protect it by means of force if necessary; but, at the same time he declared he had no authority to anticipate insurrectionary movements and gave it to be readily understood, that he did not

feel at liberty to furnish such aid, till some overt act of violence should have been committed. He expressed a reliance on the good sense of the people of the state, that they would not rush into revolution to obtain redress of grievances, and that with the government itself, a spirit of conciliation would prevail over rash councils. The letter bore date, Washington, April 11, 1842.

From the tenor of this letter, through the ultimate support of the Executive was ensured, still it seemed remote, and the condition of an overt act of violence before it could be realised, was any thing but pleasant to contemplate. The letter did nothing to allay the excitement, nor to impede the progress of those engaged in the erection of a new government; for though some of their adherents gave back, those who remained were daily strengthened in their resolution by the tone of sundry presses abroad which declared that, in case the government at Washington should interfere by force in the quarrel, all necessary means should be furnished from other states, to sustain the Suffrage Party against them.

Affairs had now assumed an aspect which was alarming to the peaceably disposed citizens of the state, of all parties. The government party saw the laws defied and violated; and whatever power they might have, to attempt to execute them at the expense of the blood of their party, was a painful alternative, from which they shrank with horror. Nor had they ever intended the military force of the United States should proceed to hostilities, except in case of dire

necessity, had such a force been furnished. On the other hand, the men who controlled the destinies of the opposite party, had declared it their invincible determination, never to strike the first hostile blow, and not to act at all, except on the defensive. But then neither party trusted implicitly in the good faith of the other ; and, to make the matter worse, the defensive action of the Suffrage Party, to use their own explanation, was resistance of the existing legal authorities, in all attempts to execute the provisions of the " Algerine Law," so called by them, and to prevent the organization and establishment of the new government. A general gloom was spread over the city of Providence, the principal arena of the quarrel. Father was arrayed against son, and son against father. Brothers and friends were found in the opposite ranks, in hostile array against each other :—Confidence was destroyed :—Business was at a stand : And no one could predict what was next to come. In this dilemma, the Charter Governor of the State finding his powers entirely inadequate to the crisis, concluded to convene the General Assembly in special session. The call was made, and the Assembly convened at Providence, April 25th 1842.

CHAPTER. XIII.

At the special session referred to at the close of the preceding chapter, a spirit appeared to pervade the

body, with a few exceptions, to sustain the government in its hour of peril, and to carry it through the approaching crisis at all hazards, and at every necessary sacrifice. By a portion of the people who favored and sustained its cause, it was thought advisable to take measures to call a convention: and a portion of that portion also wished that, as a preliminary measure, the Assembly would extend the suffrage in the choice of delegates to that convention. Those who expressed such sentiments were comparatively few however, as many of the party, some of them the most ardent and unwavering friends of an extension, were of the opinion that the legislature owed it to themselves, and to the state, not to act in such an emergency; but that all action on the subject should be suspended, until it could take place free from all intimidation, and with due deliberation. Resolutions were however introduced to call a convention, and to extend the suffrage in voting for delegates. But they were postponed; the Assembly declining to do any thing on the subject in the then state of public feeling, and especially as, in about a week afterwards, a new Assembly was to convene, which had previously been elected by the freemen.

At this special session, resolutions passed to authorise the Governor to take measures, in his discretion, to secure and protect the public property, and to fill vacancies in militia offices. A Board of Councillors was also appointed, to advise and assist the Governor in the discharge of his duties, which had now become arduous and critical. A resolution was also proposed

to authorise the Governor to accept the services of volunteers; but it was deemed unconstitutional, and laid aside. Some other business was transacted, but nothing of any special importance; and the Assembly adjourned. Meantime, the public excitement continued to increase instead of being abated; and the Suffrage Party, at least those who continued to act in that capacity, relaxed not an iota in their stern resolves, or boldness of speech and action; but pressed forward with unsurpassed energy, for the completion of their projects.

The first election under the People's Constitution, occurred, as already stated, on the 18th of April, previous to the special session of the Assembly above named. THOMAS WILSON DORR, of Providence, to whom reference has been several times made in the foregoing pages, was elected Governor. From the unconquerable obstinacy of the man, from his tenacious adherence to the principle of universal suffrage, from his indefatigable perseverance in any and every cause in which he might be engaged, as well as from his good talents and acquirements, no one for a moment supposed he would recede from the ground he had taken, or relinquish his purpose as long as a ray of hope remained. And when it was found that the Suffrage Party had also elected a full Senate, and nearly a full house, of men who had dared to accept office in defiance of the legislative enactments, there were but very few of the government party who did not fully make up their minds that the dreaded crisis must come. Still, very little, if any, actual

preparation was made to meet it. Immediately after the above election, on the next day, April 19th, the regular election was held under the Charter. Governor King was re-elected by a very large majority of the freemen ; as was also a Senate in support of the existing government ; and which was composed of five men from each of the political parties. The House of Representatives was composed of men also pledged to the government, without distinction of party, except six, who were the adherents of Mr. Dorr. We had now two governments elect in the State, each equally determined and resolved not to yield to the other, and thus affairs stood till the 3d of May.

CHAPTER XIV.

ACCORDING to the provision of the People's Constitution to that effect, the officers of the State, elect, under that instrument, assembled in the city of Providence on the 3d of May, 1842, for the purpose of organizing a government for the State of Rhode Island. The State House having been refused them by the authorities, they proceeded, in due time, to an unfinished building which was designed for a foundry, and which had been obtained for their use. On the morning of that day, the people began to assemble ; and at an early hour in the forenoon, the number was large. A procession was formed, which

proceeded to the place of meeting under a military escort. It had been given out, that there would be a body of military present, to the amount of at least 1500; and it was generally believed by the adherents of the new government, that it would amount to 2500. The whole affair was however meagre to what was generally expected on either hand. The entire military, including officers, amounted to no more than 495 men; and the entire number of persons in the procession, armed and unarmed, to 1650. The new legislature was organised in the usual form, and proceeded to business. In proceeding to the place of meeting, the portion of the procession composed of Mr. Dorr and the other members of the government elect, was flanked, on the right and left, by a military guard. And the guard, as well as all the other military in the procession, were supposed to march with loaded muskets, and furnished with ball catridges. During the day, no popular disturbance occurred, and at night, all was quiet. There was also a military guard at the place of meeting during business hours, through the session, and at Mr. Dorr's quarters at other times.

The session of the People's General Assembly, as the above was called by its friends, was short. It was convened on the 3d of May, and adjourned on the 5th, to assemble at Providence again on Monday, July 4th, 1842. In the course of the session, not a vast deal of business was attempted. A message was delivered by Mr., now styled Governor Dorr, in which he laid before the assembled body a sort of

detailed history of events connected with the movements and proceedings of the party, and marked out a course of policy to be pursued. The message was bold, firm, and decided in its tone, and dignified in its character, as might have been expected of the man. The first legislative act performed, was, the passage of resolutions to inform the President and Congress of the United States, and the Governors of the several States, of the establishment of the new government. A proposition was made by Mr. Dorr, to take possession of the State House in Providence, and other State property. But he was overruled by his legislature, who were not prepared to second him. The policy of Mr. Dorr was undoubtedly the true one, as it would have manifested a full confidence in the legitimacy of the new government, and the determination to sustain it; and strengthened the confidence of its friends. The manner in which they shrunk from the proposed measure, savored either of timidity, or a want of confidence, which was more fully shown by the subsequent conduct of a large portion of the members, who, in quick succession, have informed the public, through the medium of the press, that they have resigned their respective offices. Towards the close of the session, a resolution was adopted, and agents were appointed under it, to demand possession of the public records, funds, and other property; but affairs soon assumed such a form as to render the demand a somewhat dangerous business; and it was never made. Little was done in the way of organizing the various de-

partments of government. A few inferior offices were filled, and the famous "*Algerine Law*" was formally repealed with due solemnity; while, ludicrously enough, the old courts, well known to be strongly opposed to the revolutionary movement, were continued in office. The reason probably was, that the candidates for the Bench under the People's Constitution, had sundry misgivings about assuming the responsibilities of office. Thus the session passed off, leaving the mere skeleton of a government, without either moral or physical force to give it maturity or life.

CHAPTER XV.

IN conformity with the provision of the Charter, the General Assembly elected by the legal freemen of the State, assembled at Newport, on Wednesday May 4th, to organise the government for the ensuing year, and to transact such business as might be deemed necessary. The Assembly was duly organised on that day, and proceeded to the consideration of affairs connected with the important crisis which had arrived. All hope of conciliation had passed away, unless by an unconditional submission to the demands of the party with Mr. Dorr at its head, which was, the abdication of the Charter government, and the full and complete surrender of all its powers into the hands of the body elected under the People's

Constitution. This was not to be thought of; and the General Assembly proceeded at once to adopt measures to repel force by force. Immediately after the organization of the Assembly, a resolution was introduced, declaring that the crisis had arrived, that was contemplated in the letter to the Governor from the President of the United States; and calling on the latter for aid. For, though no actual violence had been committed by the party in arms, yet the holding of their legislative session, assuming and exercising the powers of government, and openly arraying an armed force with apparently hostile intentions, were deemed treasonable and insurrectionary. The Assembly, and their constituents, did not consider that the constitution and laws of the United States required that actual violence and bloodshed should take place, as a condition of the promised succor, and desired to be able to array a force on the side of the government of the State, which would be competent to overawe the disaffected party, and prevent such an awful catastrophe. After a long debate, in which some of the friends of Mr. Dorr and his government in the Assembly, took a very active part in opposition, the resolutions passed by a vote of 56 to 6; and commissioners were immediately despatched to the seat of the General Government, with full powers on behalf of the State. Measures were taken at this session to disband a disaffected chartered military company in the city of Providence, and to reorganize, and to prepare for active duty, the military in general. The Assembly then adjourned, after a ses-

sion of two days, to await the issue of the requisition on the President, and to meet again at Newport on the Wednesday following ; May 11.

The return of Governor King, and a portion of the Assembly, from Newport to Providence, afforded an opportunity for the display of feeling in those two places. On Wednesday evening, some half a dozen individuals in Providence, proposed to get up a procession and escort for the occasion. On Thursday, a committee of arrangements was appointed. On Friday, the Newport Artillery, numbering more than 80, and about 300 citizens without arms, escorted the Governor and his friends to the steamboat on their departure from that town. On their arrival at Providence they were received by an escort, consisting of the First Light Infantry, numbering 105 men, the Marine Artillery, 70, the National Cadets, 83, and 635 citizens without arms; making in all, 1050 persons. Previous to the arrival of the Governor, a report was put in circulation that an attempt would be made to seize his person ; and the report gained some credence in consequence of certain demonstrations made by the opponents of the government. The soldiers composing the military escort were therefore served with ball cartridges on the occasion; but whether there was a serious intention entertained of seizing the Governor, or the precautions taken to prevent it proved an effectual hint, the attempt was not made.





Immediately after the close of the session of the Assembly under the People's Constitution, several

arrests were made, of prominent men in that body. Those arrests, at least those made in the city of Providence, were generally attended with a good deal of commotion, and large crowds attended at the place of examination. Except in one instance however, no attempt was made at a rescue, and that was overcome by the efforts of the person under arrest. Mr. Dorr himself was surrounded by his friends. It was supposed that any attempt to take him would be attended with violence, and probably with bloodshed; and as the authorities, under the existing circumstances, did not feel disposed to resort to extremities, he was suffered to remain unmolested. The tone and feeling of his friends at that time, may be judged of, and from the following notice published in his official organ, the Providence Daily Express, May 10, 1848 :

"THE PEOPLE OF RHODE ISLAND, TO ARMS!"

PARTICULAR NOTICE.







The following is the order of proceedings under the "Algerine Act" to the present time, according to their respective dates.







4th* James Joslin, Esq., late Judge of the Court of Common Pleas for the county of Newport, was arrested for Treason, May 7th, on complaint of  ———, of Newport,  Warrant issued by  **JOB DURFEE†** 






5th. BENJAMIN ARNOLD, JR., of Providence, ar-

* A prior notice had been published, up to No 3 inclusive.

† Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

rested for Treason, May 9th, and committed to prison. Arrested by  DANIEL K. CHAFEE, High Street,  on complaint of HENRY G. MUMFORD, Bowen Street. The warrant was issued by  HENRY L. BOWEN, George Street,   SAMUEL CURRY of this city, [late of Her British Majesty's Colony, Nova Scotia,] witness and informer. 

WELCOME B. SAYLES, Esq., of Cumberland, almost arrested by  AMOS COOK, of Cumberland,  on complaint of  HENRY L. KENDALL, High Street, Providence,  warrant issued by  HENRY L. BOWEN, of this city aforesaid. 

7th. HEZEKIAH WILLARD, of Providence, arrested for Treason, by  DANIEL K. CHAFEE, No. 41 High Street, Providence,  on complaint of HENRY G. MUMFORD, Bowen Street,  warrant issued by  HENRY L. BOWEN, George Street.  Mr. Willard was committed to prison."

It is the dictate of charity to place on the actions of men, the best constructions that circumstances will warrant. In ordinary times, or in times of political excitement originating in a war of words so common in our electioneering campaigns, a notice like the foregoing, would assume but very little importance. But the circumstances under which that was penned and published, whatever may have been the object, stamp it with the character of baseness and cruelty, worthy of Robespierre, himself. It was addressed to

the passions of a party already highly inflamed, and, in a considerable degree rancorous :—A party which held in its fraternal embrace, a large number of ignorant men, and desperate. Affairs had reached that juncture, when an appeal to arms was deemed almost inevitable, and when both parties had commenced their preparations for the dreadful event, with the frightful horrors of a civil war in prospect. Such a notice, under such circumstances, could only be considered as designed to mark certain men as victims for the knife of the assassin, and their dwellings as the prey of the midnight torch. The thought is appalling, and we would fain shut it out forever ; but as we can find no apology for the notice itself, so neither can we cast off the conviction, that, in a certain event, it was to be copied by an infuriated populace in fire and blood ! Happily, it fell harmless to the earth ; and its intended victims remain unscathed.

It will be seen that the contest had now assumed an aspect altogether different from what it had at first presented. Originally, the object was, an extension of suffrage; and the means to obtain it, the ballot-box under the control of public opinion. The point had already been surrendered by the freeholders themselves; and the concessions they had made, been rejected. The freeholders stood ready, on the restoration of peace and quiet, to make a new effort for a constitution to satisfy the people. But their advances passed unheeded. The contest waged between the two parties therefore, did not then embrace the subject of an extension of suffrage, and never has done since.

The true and only question between the contending parties, since the rejection of the Landholders' Constitution, in March last, is, whether the Peoples' Constitution, and the government formed or to be formed under it, should or should not be recognised as the paramount law and government of the State. It became, in other words, a question of power ; and the friends of the People's Constitution, having erected their form of government, and finding themselves unable to establish it by common consent, determined to do so by means purely revolutionary ; or in other words, *vi et armis*. The friends of the existing government have ever been ready, since the rejection of the proposed constitution in March last, to propose and adopt another, with a liberal extension of suffrage ; but the other party would accept of no alternative but the recognition of their own, and to which the friends of the government would not accede, This is the true state of the case.

CHAPTER XVI.

ON the 11th of May, according to the previous adjournment, the General Assembly again met at Newport. At the opening of the session, one of the commissioners who had been despatched to Washington on the 5th, presented a letter from the President of the United States, bearing date, " Washington,

May 7, 1842." [See Appendix.] This letter, like the former, though it held out the prospect of aid in the distance, appeared to have been dictated by the same cold, calculating policy as the former; and though the President seemed still to consider the injunctions of the constitution and the laws imperative, to furnish such aid, he seemed also to say to the General Assembly, that no requisition would be deemed sufficient, unless steeped in the blood of their fellow citizens. The alternative was a dreadful one, and yet there was nothing left but submission to the decree. How far a regard to future events connected with his own prospects and wishes, may have influenced the President in his decision, we are not prepared to say; but certain it is, the subject had become one of party discussion in the political press, and been introduced into Congress, and bandied there on party ground. And it is equally certain that the President, in his letters, placed himself much in a like quandary with a celebrated personage, who is fabled as having made an unsuccessful attempt to please every body, while on the way to market with a braying, long-eared quadruped.

At this session of the Assembly, no farther measures of a defensive character were adopted. Meantime, Mr. Dorr had left the State, and made his appearance in the city of New York. Thence, he proceeded to Washington, where he met several of his friends who had preceded him. While there, they had interviews with the President of the United States, and a number of the members of Congress;

and soon returned to New York. During this time, active preparations were in progress in the city of Providence, and in some other towns, on both sides, of a military character. The government party had placed a strong guard in the Arsenal, in Providence, which contained five pieces of artillery, about twenty-three hundred muskets, and a quantity of ammunition. The chartered military companies, except the United Volunteers, and United Train of Artillery, in Providence were filled up and put under drill on the part of the government, as were also the chartered companies and volunteer companies in Newport, Bristol, and Warren. The citizens of Providence, friendly to the government, were requested to arm themselves, and prepare to defend the city; and arms were tendered to them for that purpose. On the other hand, Mr. Dorr's military forces, in the city, and out of it, were putting themselves in a state of preparation for the approaching crises, and arming themselves, at least a portion of them, as far as circumstances would permit; while certain party presses urged and cheered them on, and held out to them the promise of all necessary aid, in case the United States government should interfere. They never appear to have dreamed of meeting with any serious resistance from the State government and its friends. In fact, they seemed rather to ridicule the notion that the aristocrats, as they called the government party, would fight, and looked on them with a sneer, as men already conquered. The friends of the government entertained much the same feeling towards the Dorr party, as it was now familiarly

called ; and many were rather inclined to ridicule the preparation for hostile operations,

On Thursday, May 12, Burrington Anthony, former U. S. Marshal for the Rhode Island District, who had been with Mr. Dorr, to Washington, returned in advance of him, leaving him in New York. The rumor preceded his arrival, that the President of the United States had appointed Mr. Webster, Secretary of State, and one or two other gentlemen, as commissioners to mediate between the contending parties, and to bring affairs to an amicable adjustment. Anthony professed to be the bearer of despatches to that purport to one of the most prominent men in the government party, a member of the Legislature of the State. It turned out, however, that the President had made no such appointment, and that the despatches consisted of a single letter from Mr. Webster to the gentleman named above, containing certain overtures, which, on being presented to the Governor and Council, were promptly rejected. They had become satisfied that the government of the State, and its friends, must fight their own battle, and did not feel disposed to submit to any dictation as to what they should demand or concede. [See Appendix.]

On Thursday evening, May 12th, a meeting was held, and numerously attended, by the adherents of Mr. Dorr, on the State House Parade in Providence. Speeches were made by several persons, on the occasion, breathing defiance to the charter government ; and resolutions were passed, stating that no compromise would be accepted but what recognised the sov-

ereignty of the whole people ; nor that without the repeal of the Algerine Law. The meeting also resolved that the government and its adherents sought for blood, that no more arrests should be permitted under the odious law, and that Gov. Dorr should be protected. And to these points, the persons come composing the meeting, generally, pledged themselves personally, by the response of yes or no.

Mr. Dorr still remained at New York, where meetings had been held by his political party friends, to encourage and aid him ; and it was generally understood that money, men, and arms, would be furnished by them for his use, but which, when the crisis came, did not appear to be forthcoming. On Saturday, May 14th, he left that city for Stonington, on his way to Providence, having been escorted to the boat in which he was to take passage, by several hundred persons, but without military honors. He arrived at Stonington on the next [Sunday] morning ; and the same day, a party of his friends, embracing several members of his Assembly, and about thirty men under arms, went down to meet him. On Monday, May 16th, he arrived at Providence, in company with those who had previously gone out to meet him ; and was received at the Rail Road Depot by a large concourse of people, consisting of about twelve hundred in all, of whom, about two hundred and fifty were under arms. In an undress uniform, and a sword at his side, the hero of the day was escorted, or rather guarded, through the principal streets of the city, in an open barouche drawn by four white horses. He was ac-

accompanied by his Secretary of State, and the Sheriff of Providence elect under the People's Constitution ; and, in that style, was conducted to the house of Burrington Anthony, where he took up his quarters, protected by a military guard, and two small pieces of artillery. All parties were doubtless disappointed in this array of force. Unwearied pains had been taken for some time previous, to organize and drill it, and to have it in readiness to act at a moment's warning. The occasion on which it was now to be used, was one of the utmost importance, and yet, after all, it was found impossible to concentrate in the city, the number of three hundred men who were ready to take up arms for the People's Constitution ; and of the number actually embodied, few more than one hundred and fifty resided in the city.

To any man at all acquainted with military operations, and possessed of a less sanguine temperament than the commander-in-chief of this motley band, the circumstance would at once have afforded convincing evidence, that his object was impracticable. But, if there be one trait more prominent than all others in the character of Thomas Wilson Dorr, it is that of obstinacy, which takes no note of circumstances, and heeds neither advice nor remonstrance, when arrayed against his predeterminations. On this principle he acted ; and while many of his friends and associates endeavored to dissuade him from his rash enterprise, and others were forsaking him on every hand, he determined to strike the blow, and to open the frightful drama of civil war. Accordingly, on the day he en-

tered Providence, he issued his Proclamation, [See Appendix] and commenced the work of preparation.

CHAPTER XVII.

While the preparations of Mr. Dorr were in progress, the major part of the community friendly to the existing government, and which now embraced a large number of persons who had advocated the peaceable measures of the Suffrage Party, were rather disposed to treat the affair with ridicule; and doubted if any serious movement were intended. Others, who better knew the disposition of the man with whom they had to deal, looked on the affair in a different light; and all were of opinion that they should prepare for defence. By Tuesday morning, the Insurgents, as the government party now termed their opponents, had mounted two more pieces of cannon. They then had four pieces, though all them were of iron, and nearly useless for any other purpose than for the defence of Mr. Dorr's quarters, in front of which they were planted. The first point of attack was hinted to be the Arsenal; with the obvious intent of getting possession of the munitions of war contained in it, in order to deprive the government of their use, and to distribute them among those who might be found ready to use them for the opposing party. On the morning of Tuesday, May 17th, Gov. King called his council and fellow citizens around him for consultation and advice. In

the conclusion, it was determined that the measure of arming the friends of the government should be carried out, and that an order should be despatched, on the first indication of hostile movements, to call in troops from other parts of the State. Before the meeting had terminated, it had been given out by some one in the secret, that Mr. Dorr had determined to make the attack on the Arsenal, at two o'clock the following morning, Wednesday, May 18th. The report was not generally credited, it being known that the force then at Dorr's command, badly equipped, and men generally on whom no reliance could be placed, must prove entirely incompetent to the undertaking. The Arsenal, too, a strong stone building, in the western suburbs of the city, was well guarded, and fully supplied with all that was needed for the occasion. Besides, it was situated on an open level plain, without defence or shelter for an invading force; and while it was well known that the government could raise a military force in the city of Providence alone, of at least treble the number of that under Dorr's command, it seemed almost impossible to believe he could have the folly and madness to make the desperate attempt. But he was not the man to calculate on impossibilities. *Try*—was his motto; and he never considered any thing impossible, till all means of execution had been applied, and had failed. There had been no time since his arrival, that his entire force could not have been routed and overwhelmed in twenty minutes, by the force the government could command in the city. But each party determined not to shed the first blood;

if possible, to avoid the necessity. Thus matters remained up to Tuesday afternoon, at one o'clock, when the signal gun was fired at Dorr's quarters. A large crowd assembled; and the men under arms, were ordered to be ready for action, and on the ground, in thirty minutes.

By this time, the excitement in the city had become intense; and it was by no means allayed by a report that the forces of Dorr, or a portion of them, were to make the attempt, in the course of the afternoon, to seize two brass field pieces, six pounders, deposited in the Armory of the United Train of Artillery, to which company they were attached. The Armory is situated in the rear of College Street, in the very heart of the city, and is separated from the Cadet Armory, only by a narrow passage. It was hardly supposed such a daring project would be attempted; but by half past four all doubt was dispelled by the appearance of a company of Insurgent Volunteers marching boldly up College Street, and wheeling into the lane in rear of the Armory. The company mustered nearly seventy strong; and after they had wheeled on to the ground, they very deliberately loaded their muskets, and took possession of the cannon, and marched them through the streets, to Dorr's quarters. There was a guard of only six men at the Armory, and they were armed with swords only, and could offer no resistance. A large number of the Cadets and Marine Artillery were present and would have opposed forces to force; but the Governor had retired to his residence some two miles distant, and there was no one present

to give orders to act. This transaction at once awakened the adherents of the government to the reality, and showed them that they must either conquer in arms, or submit to such terms as might be dictated to them. They determined on the former course; and the business of arming was prosecuted with vigor.

Immediately after the above transaction, an express was sent to the Governor, to give him the information. He instantly returned to town, and issued orders which were sent off by express, to Warren, Bristol, and Newport, and to the south part of the State, for the military to muster, and to hold themselves in readiness to proceed to Providence at a moment's warning. In the city, all was bustle and commotion. From the hoary headed sire, of seventy winters, to the stripling just advanced to the verge of manhood, all ages, and all conditions, looked defiance, uttered the war-cry, and clad themselves for the battle field. The First Light Infantry, the National Cadets, and the Marine Artillery, three spirited and well drilled corps, paraded with full ranks, and with as much alacrity as for an ordinary drill. The Cadets and Marine Artillery marched out at 10 o'clock, P. M. and took post in the Arsenal; where were also posted the regular guard of about thirty men, and a number of volunteers; the Lt. Infantry having been held in reserve. At the same time, a steamboat was despatched to Warren, Bristol, and Newport, to bring in the troops from those towns.

During all this time, Mr. Dorr and his coadjutors were not idle; for though many of his most influential friends were with him till near midnight, endeavor-

ing to dissuade him from his rash undertaking, he still persisted, against all their expostulations, and determined to proceed. During the evening, about one hundred men under arms, joined him from Pawtucket and Woonsocket; the body from the latter place being a chartered company, and mustering between sixty and seventy men; and by midnight, the force had increased so as to number between three and four hundred. Mr. Dorr, it appeared afterwards, had imbibed the same notion that had been imbibed by many of his men—that the party opposed to them would not fight, and that the Arsenal would be readily captured. In that opinion they were probably confirmed by the forbearance that had been exercised towards them, and the ease and facility with which they had been permitted to seize and take away the field pieces already named. The capture of the Arsenal was the first measure in his plan of operations; to obtain its stores of arms and ammunition, was absolutely necessary to enable him to carry that plan out. He had staked his all upon it, and was bent on making the effort.

On that awful night, but few of the citizens of Providence retired to rest; or, if they did, retired not for slumber, but, with watchful eyes and aching hearts, to await in the most painful suspense, the dread spectacle of our fair city wrapt in flames, and her streets deluged with blood. But happily it proved only a haggard vision—The terrible catastrophe came not.

At one o'clock in the morning, Wednesday, May 18th, the signal guns were fired at the camp, in

front of Dorr's quarters, a procedure that afforded one more striking illustration of his utter ignorance of military affairs; as in giving this signal for the rally of his friends, he also gave warning to his foes to prepare for defence. By this time, his forces had begun to disperse; and many returned to their homes; so that, when the order was given to march, his entire host of armed men amounted to less than two hundred and fifty; and with this ill appointed force, he had the folly and temerity to march, with two six pounders, into the open field, without an embankment, or a defence of any description, against a superior force protected by strong stone walls, with five pieces of artillery, and small arms and ammunition in abundance; and knowing, at the same time, that he was liable to be attacked in the rear by the Light Infantry, and the citizen volunteers, and possibly if not probably, by at least three companies of Artillery, and two or three companies of Infantry, for which a steamboat had been despatched in the evening. Immediately after the signal guns had been fired, the Insurgents moved from their encampment, with Mr. Dorr at their head; and at about two o'clock in the morning, took up their position before the Arsenal, at little more than musket shot distance from it. At the same time a detachment of forty men was sent out from the main body, to intercept the march of the Light Infantry; and scouts from both parties were perambulating the plain in all directions; and some of those from the Arsenal, favored by a dense fog, and the absence of the moon which had not yet risen, penetrated even into the Insurgent lines.

When Mr. Dorr took up the line of march, notice was given by the patrol; and the alarm bells were rung. Never perhaps had the citizens of Providence witnessed a moment so full of horror! — Never had a sound struck on their ears, that carried such agony to the soul! The best men of the city were drawn up in battle array, and the flower of our youth were there. The first stroke of the bell came as the knell of death. The heart of the devoted wife, and the fond mother, sickened with anguish, as she thought on all that was dear to her on earth, and listened with agonizing suspense for the cannon's dreadful roar, that might tell the tale of death, and leave her a childless widow! Then too, lovers, sisters, and friends, shed tears of bitter anguish, and amidst the awful gloom, breathed a silent prayer to heaven, for those they loved. While visions of a city in flames, sacked and plundered, and its inhabitants devoted to the knife of the midnight assassin, rose up in the imagination; and struck the soul with horror! But heaven, in mercy, had otherwise ordained.

The men who followed Mr. Dorr to the field, it appeared had not gone there to fight, but to witness the fulfilment of his prediction, that the Arsenal would be surrendered without firing a gun. He had deceived himself and them. He sent a flag of truce, and demanded its surrender, which was refused in a manner that implied contempt. He ordered the discharge of his cannon, and no one was found sufficiently hardy to apply the match. He applied it himself, and no effect was produced beyond the burning of the pow-

der in the pans. His men, meantime, went off in squads, till he was nearly forsaken. At length he retreated, with his cannon and about thirty men, the remnant of his force ; and when daylight appeared, in two hours after he had taken the field, not a man was to be found upon it, though not a single shot had been fired. When it was found that Mr. Dorr and his party had retired, and that he, with the remnant of his force, had returned to their quarters, the forces which had rallied on the part of the government marched into the city. The Mayor of Providence issued a request to the citizens, to lay aside their ordinary concerns, and to appear in arms on the side of the laws. Those who were favorably disposed, in general, complied with the request. Nearly every place of business in the city was closed, and a large body of citizen volunteers, in addition to the organised military force, appeared in arms. At nearly eight o'clock in the morning, the steamboat arrived with a force collected during the night. It consisted of one company of Artillery, from Bristol, one from Newport and one from Warren. Soon after their arrival, the line was formed, and, in a short time, the column took up the line of march for Federal Hill, where the few remaining Insurgents lay encamped. The following is the order, as published at the time, in the Providence Journal.

“Early in the morning, the Mayor issued a notice calling upon the citizens to lay aside their usual business and assemble at the Cadet Armory to receive arms and prepare to assist in the execution of the

laws. The request was very generally complied with. The course of Dorr in attacking the Arsenal rendered any further postponement of his arrest quite out of the question. The military companies, with the citizen volunteers, were ordered to proceed to his Head Quarters, at Burrington Anthony's house. The command of the whole was assigned to Col. William Blodget.—They proceeded in the following order: Newport Artillery, Col. Swan; Providence Light Infantry, Capt. Brown; National Cadets, Capt. Martin; Citizen Volunteers, Capt. Meriweather; Marine Artillery, Lt. Col. Nightingale; Warren Artillery, Capt. Fessenden; Bristol Artillery, Lt. Col. Taylor. The companies were all reinforced by volunteers, and the whole force numbered about seven hundred muskets, with six field pieces, two French eights and four four-pounders.—While the troops were proceeding to the ground a report was received that Dorr had made his escape. A detachment of the Cadets volunteered to go in pursuit of him. They instantly mounted, but were misinformed as to his route, and returned after having gone about twenty miles in the direction of the Norwich and Worcester Railroad. Mr. Dorr made his escape soon after nine o'clock.—He returned from the attack on the Arsenal, very much discouraged and broken down; he saw that he had arrayed the whole State against him, and that his own followers would not stand by him to carry out the whole of his treasonable designs.—He found, also, that many of the members of his Legislature had determined to resign. Some of his near relatives

had called upon him, the evening previous, and urged him to desist, but they failed to make any impression upon him, although seconded by his own chief counsellors. On Wednesday morning one of his relatives provided him with the means of escape, and he very readily accepted them."

It would be of little interest to the reader, to enter more fully into the details of this bloodless affray. Suffice it to say — the gallant bands composing the column, marched up in veteran style, and without flinching, in front of the loaded cannon in the Insurgent camp; and calmly and coolly performed their evolutions, at the word of command, while the enemy stood at their guns with lighted matches, ready to deal out the messengers of death. Gov. King, with a small force, proceeded to search Anthony's house, for Dorr; but the bird had flown, as already noticed, and the search proved bootless. Horsemen were immediately despatched in chase of the fugitive, but he eluded pursuit, and escaped beyond the borders of the State. A very few reckless desperadoes took a stand on the hill, and bade defiance to the assembled force. The Commander-in-Chief, willing to spare an effusion of blood, and knowing that they could not hold out long, forbore to fire on them. On assurance being given, that if left to themselves they would surrender the cannon they had seized, and disperse, the troops were ordered from the hill. On the next day, Thursday, May 19th, the cannon were returned, and one by one, the stragglers disappeared.

CHAPTER XVIII.

It is due to a portion of the Suffrage Party who had held out to this time, to state that they ostensibly discountenanced the violent proceedings of Mr. Dorr; protested against them, refused to take up arms themselves, and endeavored to dissuade him and others from doing so. They appeared to have joined in the suffrage cause, with the sole view of carrying their points by peaceable means, and to have been hurried into the vortex of revolution, before they were aware, and without their consent. A great many others, it must be confessed, sly, cunning men, went, secretly and silently, as far as they dared to go, leaving at the same time a way open for retreat. Had Dorr's incipient measures of force succeeded, and final success appeared to be more probable than defeat, they would have been in his ranks; and, in the close, would have uttered loud claims to the spoils of victory. They took, as mercenary cowards generally do, what they supposed to be the safe course, and left others to suffer, less guilty than themselves.

It would be a vain effort, to attempt to trace Mr. Dorr through all his peripatations after his second flight from Rhode Island, to the period of his return. The fact of his having slipped through the fingers of the State Authorities a second time, created a great deal of feeling, though his absence from the State served in a measure to allay the excitement. A very large majority of the people supposed that after a

defeat so signal, he could never rally again, and that in consequence of his supposed disgraceful flight, the multitude of his followers would desert him in disgust. In this respect however, as the sequel will show, the friends of the government were doomed to find they deceived themselves, as they had done in almost every case during the entire movements of the Suffrage Party, and the Dorr party of later birth.

Some of the cowardly leaders of the party, who could neither control nor withstand the tempest they had raised, urged Dorr's flight, and then apologised to their people, by informing them that a compromise had been made with the government; and hinting that, by virtue of that compromise, the People's Constitution would be legally established, and Thomas Wilson Dorr recognised as Governor of the State! The whole of this declaration was a complete tissue of falsehood, which served the purpose for the moment. In a few days, the deception was unveiled, and those who had practised it were denounced by their party as traitors. Mr. Dorr was again taken into favor as a patriot, a hero, and a persecuted man. The community had now lost pretty much all sense of danger, and the only object appeared to be, to arrest Dorr, that he might suffer the penalty of treason. He however managed to evade the demands of the law, by eluding the pursuit of its ministers, or guarding himself against surprise. His flight occurred as has been seen, on Wednesday morning, May 18. Before the same hour the next morning, rumor had become

extremely busy in tracing him out, and almost every one knew where he was, though scarcely any two agreed as to his place of refuge. He undoubtedly hovered, however, on the western and north-western borders of the State, for several days, and then put himself under the protection of Gov. Cleveland, of Connecticut.

Soon after the flight of Mr. Dorr, it was given out by some of his family connections, that he had relinquished the object for which he had contended, and was to depart immediately for Europe, and would not probably return. Many believed, and some who knew the spirit of the man, doubted; but all joined in wishing him a speedy departure, a quick passage, and a long visit, except those who favored his hostile projects. That he had ever intended to leave the country, is highly improbable. If he had intended to do so, he soon relinquished the intention, and, in connexion with other spirits at home and abroad, again commenced operations to carry out the contemplated revolution.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM the 2nd of May, all was doubt and uncertainty among the people of the State. The fugitive Governor was sometimes caught sight of in Connecticut, and at other times in the city of New York. He was apparently almost continually on the move,

and yet always in seclusion. Public meetings were held by his friends in the principal Atlantic cities, at which, great sympathy was expressed for him and his cause, and bitter denunciations poured out on the heads of the landholders of Rhode Island; whose damning sin was, that they did not grant an extension of suffrage, which Mr. Dorr and his associates had positively declared they would not accept, and which they had done all they could, to prevent. Several papers in Boston, Providence, New York, Philadelphia, and elsewhere, became the warm advocates of the fugitive and his party, and attempts were made to raise arms, men, and money, to aid them. Still, all continued to be vague and indefinite. Conjecture and rumor were extremely active, but those whose interest it was to know, seemed unable to obtain any clew to the secret movements. Business had been long at a stand, and a settled gloom rested on the community. People generally had sickened of the state of affairs; any attempt to communicate information calculated to create either alarm or excitement, was regarded almost with indignation. But these feelings were insufficient to stay the progress of events, and those who most dreaded to look on the shadow, were soon to be aroused to a frightful sense of the reality.

It is probable that Mr. Dorr proceeded to New York, about the 25th of May, in company with a man from that city, who appears to have been deeply in his confidence and interest. That he afterwards returned to Connecticut, is probable, if not certain; and Gov. King made a requisition on the Governor

of that State, Chauncy F. Cleveland, for his delivery to the authorities of Rhode Island, as a fugitive from justice. The demand was not complied with; and, June 8. Gov. King issued the following proclamation.

**BY HIS EXCELLENCY
SAMUEL WARD KING,**

*Governor, Captain General, and Commander-in-Chief
of the State of Rhode Island and Providence
Plantations.*

WHEREAS, THOMAS WILSON DORR, of Providence, in the county of Providence, charged with treason against the said State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, is a fugitive from justice, and supposed to be now within the limits of our sister State of Connecticut; and from credible information, is still pursuing his nefarious enterprise against the peace and dignity of said State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations; and Whereas, I made a requisition, on the 25th day of May last, addressed to his Excellency Chauncy F. Cleveland, Governor of said State of Connecticut, for the apprehension and delivery of the said Thomas Wilson Dorr, according to the constitution and laws of the United States in such case made and provided; which requisition his Excellency Chauncy F. Cleveland, Governor of said State, has hitherto declined to comply with:

I do, therefore, pursuant to authority in me vested, and by advice of the Council, hereby offer a reward of One Thousand Dollars for the delivery of the said Thomas Wilson Dorr to the proper civil authority of

this State, within one year from the date hereof, that he may be dealt with as to law and justice shall appertain.

Given under my hand and the seal of said State at the city of Providence, this eighth day of June, [L. s.] in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty-two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the sixty-sixth.

SAMUEL WARD KING.

By his Excellency's command:

HENRY BOWEN,
Secretary of State.

But this proclamation, with its temptation in the form of one thousand dollars, proved not sufficiently potent to fix the grasp of the sheriff on its object. In the city of New York, probably surrounded by his "*Spartan Band*," said to be a body of men of no particular principles or description, and with the countenance and aid of others of a more elevated standing in society, he defied the Proclamation and the sheriff, and remained secure from arrest. Meantime, rumors were continually afloat, of large supplies of arms, men, and money, to be furnished him from Boston, New York, and elsewhere. About the same time, he addressed the Legislature of Maine through the medium of Gov. Fairfield; but all he received in reply, was, the cold comfort of a few resolutions by way of sympathy.

After a breathing spell of a few days, the party again began to move in Rhode Island. The Procla-

mation created some excitement among them, and by June 11th, three days after its date, there appeared some indications of a general movement among the Insurgents in the northern part of the State. It may be well to remark in this place, that, a very large proportion of Mr. Dorr's strength, is, as it has been from the commencement, in the city and county of Providence. A few it is believed have joined him in his hostile movements, from some other towns and counties, but their number has been so small as to be scarcely deserving of notice. But, in the county of Providence they have been able to muster in considerable force, and, in some towns, have overawed the friends of law and order, and, by threats, prevented them from taking up arms. Mr. Dorr had found the city altogether too warm for him on the 18th of May; and although his assembly had been adjourned to meet there again on the Fourth of July, he consulted prudence, and came to the conclusion to change the place of meeting, and to call the body together in some place in the country, where he could more readily concentrate his force and give his enemies more trouble to get at him; and from which position he might, if need be, more readily withdraw into Connecticut, under the wing of his kind friend and protector, Gov. Cleaveland.

As early as the 10th of June, the Insurgents began to make their demonstrations. At Woonsocket, a large manufacturing village on the river Blackstone, partly in Cumberland, and partly in Smithfield, they commenced the work of reorganization, and began to

parade in arms. Almost simultaneously with this movement, small bands of armed men of the same party, sprang up in Providence, North Providence, Cumberland, Gloucester, and Burrillville, and hints were thrown out, of what was to come. Much pains were also taken by them to collect implements and munitions of war. Yet the friends of the government, though they entertained some undefined notion that an attempt would be made to hold the July session of the General Assembly under the People's Constitution, would hardly believe it possible that, so soon after such a signal defeat and dispersion as that of May 18th, another serious effort would be made to appear in arms, with a hostile intent. Every supposition to that effect was treated with ridicule, and every pains taken to prevent reports of that character from gaining credit, and to allay public excitement. Many of the reports were no doubt untrue ; such as the collection of thousands of stands of arms, a numerous park of Artillery, a host of troops from other states, &c. But enough was known to those who kept a watchful eye on the Insurgent movements, to justify the prediction that another attempt would be made, to obtain possession of the State. A number of pieces of cannon in the city, and elsewhere, mysteriously disappeared ; and secret meetings, and dark hints, exhibited indications hardly to be mistaken.

At length an occurrence took place, which, like the capture of the cannon on the 17th of May, dispelled all doubt, and put the government party on their guard. Those same cannon had been put into the

hands of the Artillery Company, at Warren, a small town about nine miles from Providence ; and, from subsequent developements, it appears the Insurgents determined to repossess themselves of them. Accordingly on the night of Saturday, June 18th, a party of about fifty men repaired thither for that purpose ; taking with them four horses, to convey the pieces to Providence. The night was dark and stormy, and therefore favorable to the attempt. But the night patrol in Providence, got wind of the movement shortly after the company had started ; and four men were despatched express to Warren, to give the alarm. From some cause, perhaps in consequence of the darkness of the night, the marauders mistook the place where the cannon were deposited, and erroneously broke open two other buildings. Before they had attempted the third, the express arrived, and turned out the guard, who instantly alarmed the town. In less than thirty minutes, there were two hundred and fifty men in the streets, under arms ; but the Insurgents all escaped, though many of them have since been taken. The alarm was fortunate for them, for had they succeeded in their attempt to get at the cannon, probably but few of them would have lived to tell the tale. On the Monday succeeding the foregoing attempt, a Powder Magazine a short distance out of the city, was discovered, by the gentleman who owned it, to have been broken open within the three preceding days, and forty-eight kegs containing twelve hundred pounds of gunpowder, to have been taken from it. No doubt was entertained as to the direction the stolen article had taken.

The public attention had been for some time drawn to Woonsocket, as the scene of future operations, by the activity manifested there. But many considered the movements in that village as a mere feint, to turn attention from the spot where Mr. Dorr and his friends really intended to take post. Chepachet, a considerable village in the town of Glocester, was one mile farther distant from Providence than Woonsocket was, and only about six miles from the line of Connecticut; and the town and the village were strong in his favor. That was considered his most eligible post, and there, his forces eventually concentrated. By the 20th of June, demonstrations were made which left the fact, and the object in view, no longer doubtful. Men with arms, and men without arms, began to collect on the spot, and an embankment was soon thrown up by them, on an eminence which commanded, at once, the village and the great road leading from Providence through it, on the route through Connecticut, to Springfield, Mass. On the 23d of June, the General Assembly then in session, passed a resolution, authorising the Governor and Council to proclaim Martial Law when they should think it necessary. The friends of Dorr who intended to take up arms, and others who were fearful of being pressed into the government service, took the hint, and fled to the Insurgent camp. The resolution was passed on Friday, and by the following Sunday, there were found in the camp, about eight hundred men, probably something more than one half the number armed; about one hundred others having left on Saturday,

and returned to their homes. Mr. Dorr had arrived at Norwich, Ct., from New York, on the 22d, and arrived at Chepachet on the morning of the 25th. The military occupied the village, and made use of many of the houses for barracks. Some of the inhabitants fled; but as Martial Law was enforced, and the roads occupied by Insurgent guards and scouts, it became difficult and dangerous either to leave the village, or to approach it.

On the day of his arrival at Chepachet, the would-be Governor issued the following documents :

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations.

A PROCLAMATION.

BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE SAME.

By virtue of the authority vested in me by the constitution, I hereby convene the General Assembly which was adjourned to meet at Providence on Monday, the 4th of July next, at the town of Glocester, on the same day, for the transaction of such business as may come before them.

And I hereby request the towns and districts, in which vacancies may have occurred, by the resignations of Representatives or Senators, to proceed forthwith to supply the same by new elections, according to the provisions of the constitution.

Given under my hand and seal of State, at Glocester, the 25th day of June, A. D. 1842.

THOMAS W. DORR.

GENERAL ORDERS.

HEAD QUARTERS, Gloucester, R. I.,

June 25th, 1842.

I hereby direct the military of this State, who are in favor of the People's Constitution, to repair forthwith to head quarters, there to await further orders ; and I request all volunteers and volunteer companies so disposed to do the same.

It has become the duty of all citizens who believe that the people are sovereign, and have a right to make and alter their forms of government, now to sustain by all necessary means, the Constitution adopted and established by the people of this State, and the government elected under the same.

The only alternative is an abject submission to a despotism, in its various practical effects, without a parallel in the history of the American States. I call upon the people of Rhode Island to assert their rights, and to vindicate the freedom which they are qualified to enjoy in common with the other citizens of the American republic.

I cannot doubt that they will cheerfully and promptly respond to this appeal to their patriotism and to their sense of justice ; and that they will show themselves in this exigency to be the worthy descendants of those ancestors who aided in achieving our National Independence.

THOMAS W. DORR,

Governor and Commander-in-Chief.

By order of the Commander-in-Chief,

WILLIAM H. POTTER, Adjutant General.

How, or by what means, the above were circulated in the state, if at all, is not known; as the papers here which had previously advocated his cause, refused to publish them, and the above copies are from a New York paper.

CHAPTER XX.

THE drama was now fairly opened; and all the preparations were either made, or in progress, for a bloody tragedy, which was destined to prove one of the most absolute and laughable farces, as far as the Chepachet manager and his *Dramatis Personæ* were concerned, ever represented on any stage since war or theatricals were first invented; or in which a Shales or a Bobadil, has ever figured.

The General Assembly had recommended the formation of a Volunteer Armed Police. In the city of Providence, for which the act was particularly intended, the call was promptly met. Rolls were opened in the several Wards of the city, and in a very short time the citizens had enrolled themselves to the number of about one thousand. The City Guards thus formed were duly organized and drilled; and the city itself was capable of turning out an effective force of more than twelve hundred, for her own defence, at a moment's warning. Providence, Warren, Bristol, and Newport, had assumed the appearance of so many camps — portions of their citi-

zens were almost continually under arms — and day and night were devoted to military tactics. The same spirit spread through most other portions of the State, except the country towns in the county of Providence, but two of which either would or dared to follow the example.

The first act of open hostility was committed by a portion of the Insurgent forces. On Wednesday night, June 22, Messrs. Charles J. Shelly, John C. Keep, Samuel W. Peckham, and Charles F. Harris, went out from Providence on a scouting expedition. During the night, they were fallen in with by a detachment from Dorr's camp, and taken prisoners. They were disarmed, robbed, and bound, and marched off twelve miles on foot to Woonsocket. Mr. Shelly, a large man, and out of health, had his hands tied behind him; and whenever he appeared to lag, was driven forward with the point of the bayonet; till at length, completely exhausted, he fainted, and was tossed into a wagon. He has not yet fully recovered his health. The rest, though roughly handled, were treated with less barbarity. In justice to the officers to whose custody they were delivered, we would remark that they disapproved of the treatment, and caused the prisoners to be released; but neither their arms nor money were restored.

On Tuesday, June 21, the General Assembly convened at Newport. Determined to do every thing in its power for conciliation, and to avert the evils of a sanguinary conflict in arms, that body, in compliance with numerous petitions, as well as the disposition of

the members, passed an act to call a convention for the formation of a constitution. The convention to be held at Newport on the second Monday in September, 1842.

The following are the provisions of the act, respecting the right of suffrage and, the representation in the convention.

“Section 3. The Constitution or Articles agreed upon by the Convention, shall be submitted to those qualified to vote as hereinafter provided, in open town or ward meetings, to be held on such day or days, and in such time and manner, as the Convention shall direct. The Constitution or articles shall be certified by the Presidents and Secretaries, and with the journal and papers of the Convention deposited in the office of the Secretary of State, who shall immediately distribute to the several town and city clerks, in due proportion, five thousand printed copies of the Constitution or articles, in pamphlet form, and also thirty thousand ballots, on one side of which shall be printed “Constitution, or Articles proposed by the Convention holden at Newport on the second Monday of September, A. D. 1842;” and on the other side thereof shall be written or printed, the word “Adopt” on one half of them, and the word “Reject” on the other half. He shall also cause said Constitution or articles to be published in any other manner the Convention may prescribe.

Section 5. The Delegates to said Convention shall

be elected upon a basis of population as follows, according to the census of 1840; every town of not more than 3,000 inhabitants, may elect two delegates; over 3,000 and not over 6,000 three delegates; over 6,000 and not over 10,000 four delegates; over 10,000 and not over 15,000 five delegates; and over 15,000, six delegates.

Section 6. In the choice of delegates to said Convention, the following descriptions of persons shall be admitted to vote. All those who are qualified to vote for general officers by existing laws, and all native male citizens of the United States, (except Narragansett Indians, convicts, paupers, persons under guardianship and non compos mentis,) who are of the age of 21 years and upwards, and who shall have had their permanent residence or home within this State for the period of 3 years next preceding their voting, and in the town or city wherein they offer to vote for the period of one year next preceding such voting, and who shall have had their names recorded with the town or city clerk of the town or city in which they shall offer to vote, in proper books to be kept by said town or city clerks for that purpose at least ten days before the day of voting; and in voting upon the adoption or rejection of said constitution or articles, in addition to those who are qualified to vote for general officers by the existing laws, all those shall be admitted to vote who will be qualified to vote for general officers under the provisions of said constitution or articles, if in force: — but this provision shall not be

construed to give to any person a right to vote at any town or ward meeting, held under and by virtue of this act, upon any other question or questions than the questions herein specifically named."

This act, as was well known beforehand, served to satisfy a great many of the disaffected party, and had the effect, at the same time, to bring out one of the strange inconsistencies of human character. The same persons who were now satisfied with the extension of suffrage in merely voting for delegates, and for or against the constitution to be proposed by them, were among the most strenuous opposers of the Landholders' Constitution, in March, because it was not liberal enough as respected the elective franchise, nor just in the representative apportionment. Yet that constitution required only a residence of two years in the state, and six months in a town or city, to qualify a native citizen to vote; and the act of June, 1842, requires as has been seen, a residence of three years in the state, and one year in the town or city. Both that constitution, and this act, confine the extension of suffrage to *native* citizens, and the latter extends it to the colored population. The exclusion of naturalized foreigners was, in the view of these late converts, a damning sin in the Landholders' Constitution, and a direct violation of the constitution of the United States; and nine tenths of them were bitterly opposed to the admission of colored people to the ballot boxes. Nor is the representative apportionment, in the act, any more equal, than it was in the above consti-

tution. Yet many of the persons who led the van against that constitution, moved heaven and earth for its rejection, and pushed on the multitude to the work of revolution, to the great hazard of individual and public safety, and to the sacrifice of more than fifty thousand dollars to the state in the shape of expenses, and five times that amount in other ways to the community, are now fully satisfied! Such is the inconsistency of men, whose opinions, feelings, and principles are absorbed in partizan warfare.

When a large number of individuals, of the Suffrage Party, became satisfied that the constitution offered in March was a liberal compromise that ought to be accepted, they were stigmatised by the same men who have now recanted, as renegades and traitors. And yet, after having rejected that constitution, and driven the State to the verge of a sanguinary civil war, those same valorous spirits are fully satisfied with an offer far less liberal, and disavow the idea of ever having intended to resort to force! But we must return to our story.

The Executive Authority, finding that the State was immediately menaced with violence, became satisfied that instant and decisive measures were necessary, to avert the impending storm, and to render its fury impotent. To do this, it was thought expedient to bring a force into the field, of sufficient magnitude to overawe the foe, and thus, if possible, to prevent a waste of blood.

By reference to the letter of President Tyler, to Gov. King, under date of May 7, 1842, it will be

seen that the President stated that, under the authority of the resolutions previously adopted by the General Assembly, he would, on any future occasion of lawless violence, promptly furnish military aid, on the application of the Governor alone. The assemblage of the Insurgent force at Chepachet in arms, the General Orders and Proclamation of Mr. Dorr, the occupation of the village and the roads by an armed force, the capture, detention, and cruel treatment of the friends of the government, &c. were circumstances which seemed to the Executive of the State, to come fully within a fair construction of the President's assurance. Gov. King hence made a third requisition for aid, which was rejected because it did not proceed from the State Legislature, then in session !

On the 23d of June, the Commander-in-Chief issued his orders to the military to put themselves in readiness, and to be prepared to take the field at a moment's warning ; and on the 24th a steamboat was ordered down the Bay, to bring in the troops from Warren, Bristol, and Newport. In the afternoon of the same day, she returned, bringing in three companies of artillery, one from each of the above places, with seven pieces of brass ordnance, six pounders. The boat returned down the Bay, and, the next day, June 26th, brought in about three hundred infantry ; militia and volunteers, from Newport, Tiverton, Warren and Barrington. Meantime, a company of about eighty volunteers had arrived from Warwick and Coventry ; and a considerable body from Portsmouth,

Middletown, Little Compton, and other places. On Sunday, the Washington Brigade, entire, came in on the Stonington Railroad, mustering about five hundred strong; and the Kentish Guards, a chartered company of about fifty men, swelled the force. The Fourth Brigade, of about three hundred men mustered in the southern portion of the State, and without coming to Providence, were under orders to be ready to march by a different direction, to the scene of expected action. A company of Sea Fencibles, composed of mariners, a bold and hardy set of men, had been formed. They numbered sixty-five men; and were to take out with them, a Paixham gun, (a thirty-two pounder,) and an iron twelve pounder. A company of Carbineers was also formed, mostly of young men belonging in Rhode Island, but resident for the time in New York; and who had returned to their native State, to tender their aid in the hour of peril. They were armed with Colt's repeating carbines, each with six barrels. By Sunday evening, June 26th, the force mustered in the city was not far from three thousand strong, and continually augmenting. Among them, were thirteen pieces of artillery, all six pounders, except the two above named. Many of the troops from the country were without arms, but they were promptly armed and equipped from the government stores; and the whole presented a formidable front. On Saturday, June 25th, the General Assembly passed an act placing the State under Martial Law. On Sunday morning, guards were posted at the avenues into the city, and in Market Square; and

many persons were put under arrest. The streets were thronged with the military, and others; and nothing was seen, heard, or talked of, but the array and din of war; while troops continued to press in, in large bodies, companies, and squads.

Wm. Gibbs McNeil was appointed to command the forces, with the rank of Major General, and entered forthwith on the duties of his office. Associated with him, were many gentlemen of talents and energy, and well qualified to aid, both in council and the field.

The plan of operations appears to have been, to concentrate a portion of the force in front of the Insurgent encampment, at Chepachet, by marching detachments to the village on the several routes leading to it, from Providence and Woonsocket. Another object was, to throw in a strong force between the encampment and the Connecticut line, to prevent the enemy from retreating to the rear. Accordingly, the National Cadets, ninety strong, under the command of Col. Josiah H. Martin, took up the line of march for Woonsocket, on Monday, June 27th, at 10 o'clock, A. M. They arrived there after a march of a few hours, and took post in the village. They were to have been followed by the Sea Fencibles, in the afternoon; but, in consequence of some mistake about transportation, that corps was detained till Tuesday morning.

On Sunday, the 26th, the Bristol Artillery, the Bristol Neck Infantry, and the Newport, Middletown, and Barrington volunteers, marched on the road to

Chepachet, by Fruit Hill, and were joined on Monday the 27th by the First Lt. Infantry, and the Marine Artillery, of Providence, at Greenville. The Newport Artillery, Warren Artillery, and Warren Infantry, marched for Scituate on the same day; and the Third Washington Brigade, under Gen. Steadman, took the road through Foster. They were joined, on the march, by a portion of the Fourth, or Kent Brigade under Gen. Greene. The object of this latter force, was, to throw itself between Chepachet and the Connecticut line, to cut off the retreat of Mr. Dorr and his force. There are several companies and detachments not included in the above, whose particular stations and duty the writer is not, at this moment, able to learn; but which will be mentioned in the sequel.

CHAPTER XXI.

The plan was well laid, and could it have been carried out earlier, would undoubtedly have resulted in the capture of the entire force at Chepachet. But the movement of the troops was a few hours too late for that result. It is probable Mr. Dorr and his friends expected a re-enforcement of men from New York, and did not calculate on a movement so speedy and efficient on the part of his adversaries; but his re-enforcement did not arrive, though report says it was on its way. On Monday, he received intelligence

of the preparations nearly completed, to attack him. During the day, his father visited his quarters, and remonstrated with him against his rash undertaking. And at about seven o'clock, P. M. he silently and privately decamped, leaving behind him a letter, in which he directed his forces to disband themselves. At the same time, he addressed a note to a gentleman in Providence, of which, the following is a copy.

Glocester June 27th, 1842.

Dear Sir.—Please hand the enclosed as directed. Believing, that a majority of the People who voted for the constitution, are opposed to its further support by military means, I have directed that the military here assembled be dismissed.

I trust that no impediments will be thrown in the way of the return of our men to their homes.

Yours truly,

T. W. DORR.

The communication referred to and enclosed in the above letter, went immediately on its receipt, before the Governor and Council — and was published in the Daily Express of June 28th.

Immediately on the receipt of the above, all was bustle and commotion in the city. The night proved dark, and the rain poured in torrents. But orders were dispatched to the troops on the roads, marching to the rear of the Insurgent force, to push on, which was done accordingly ; and another was despatched to Woonsocket, for the Cadets to retire from that post,

lest an overpowering force should press down upon them, from Chepachet. The orders were promptly obeyed. The Cadets, however, returned to their post very early on Tuesday morning, where they were soon reenforced by the Sea Fencibles, and a detachment of one hundred and eight men from the City Guards. They immediately took possession of the village, enforced martial law, and remained there, through the week, except the City Guards, who returned to town on Thursday. On Tuesday, the detachments on the various roads, one after the other arrived at Chepachet ; but they found the camp nearly deserted, and every thing in disorder. They captured a considerable number of prisoners, five pieces of cannon which were in the camp, and one in the woods, together with a quantity of arms, ammunition, and baggage ; after which, the main body returned to the city, leaving a force to occupy the village, to preserve peace, and protect the inhabitants, for a few days.

On the same day that Dorr evacuated his camp, a body of some two or three hundred men assembled in Pawtucket, Mass., with several well known adherents of Mr. Dorr among them, apparently determined to break through the lines, to cross the bridge, and to enter Rhode Island. The Kentish Guards were posted on the Rhode Island side of the Bridge, in Pawtucket. [The bridge is *all* in Rhode Island.] Early in the evening, the mob began to press on ; and assailed the guard with brack-bats and other missiles ; and wounded one or more. They were ordered to disperse, but would not obey the command. A volley of musketry

was fired over their heads ; and still they persisted. A second order to disperse, was given, with no better effect ; and the order to fire, was given, and promptly obeyed. One man was killed, and probably one or two others slightly wounded. In the evening, the Carbineers were ordered out ; who, on their arrival, relieved the Kentish Guards, and cleared the bridge. A detachment of the City Guards was also sent out ; and next day, they were followed by the United Train of Artillery, with two six pounders. For several nights, the mob continued to collect, and to disperse in the day time ; but no farther violence was offered after Monday night. From day to day, portions of the force were recalled ; the Carbineers remaining on duty in the village, till Friday afternoon.

There were many incidents that occurred during this almost bloodless campaign, with which we should like to enliven our pages, but space will not permit, and we are compelled to pass them by.

The writer has implied that the movements were not sufficiently prompt to gain the grand object ; the capture of Mr. Dorr, and his entire force; although the whole were routed and dispersed by the mere appearance of the formidable array, and the war apparently ended. But so far from its being matter of surprise that such delay should have occurred, it is astonishing that, under the circumstances, it had not been much greater. It was only on Friday the order for troops was issued. They were men to be called from their several occupations from all sections of the state, and few, except members of chartered companies, at all

accustomed even to ordinary military duty. Yet, by Sunday afternoon, nearly three thousand had been collected at Providence. A large number of these were either badly armed, or not armed at all; and little or no preparation had been made for supplies by the commissary Department. Yet, under all these disadvantages, a large proportion of the troops were ready for the field on Sunday; the rest were so by Monday noon; and before Monday night, the arrangements were complete, and the entire body either on the march, or prepared to move at the first sound of the bugle. Seldom, if ever, has greater promptness and energy been displayed, on any occasion, in mustering a militia force; and never can there have been greater alacrity and willingness on the part of the force itself.

CHAPTER XXII.

ON Friday, June 24, the General Assembly adjourned at Newport, to meet at Providence the next day. We have already seen that they established Martial Law. On Monday, the 27th, they voted to adjourn till the Thursday following; and most of the members not occupied with other public duties, armed themselves and took the field. Immediately after the flight of Mr. Dorr, Gov. King issued another Proclamation for his arrest, offering a reward of five thousand dollars. The Legislature assembled again *after the*

war, according to adjournment, adopted measures to pay the expenses incurred, appointed commissioners to settle claims, and others to examine prisoners; and adjourned to October.

Since that time, Martial Law has continued in force, though by a General Order farther arrests under it are prohibited, unless by virtue of a warrant from the Governor himself, or a member of his council; and peace and quiet prevail. A large number of persons who fled from the camp at Chepachet are either absent from the State, or concealed within it. And many who favored Mr. Dorr's cause, who were unwilling to run the hazard of taking up arms, left the State at the commencement of the troubles, and have not yet returned.

The execution of Martial Law, is always unpleasant, and, even in the hands of persons averse to harsh measures, will ever be attended with some evils which it is almost impossible to avoid; while it certainly affords an opportunity to those disposed to do so, to gratify the feelings of private animosity. It is a measure which nothing but the paramount consideration of the public safety can justify, and even then, in its mildest form, can never fail to call forth complaints from those who are affected by it. In the present case, many of those who have been arrested, and others whose premises underwent the "*searching operation*," and who were entirely unaccustomed to such a state of affairs, have exclaimed loudly against it, as an act of arbitrary tyranny. It is altogether likely, for it could hardly be expected to be otherwise,

that, in some cases, undue severity may have been practised, and that some who were innocent, may have suffered. Yet probably in few instances, if in any, has abuse been intended, and there is reason to believe that, the disagreeable duty of arrest and search has been performed with as much prudence and gentleness as circumstances would permit.

Of the capture and treatment of prisoners, too, a great deal has been said abroad, though little or nothing is heard on the subject among our own citizens. A state of captivity is not always the most agreeable, nor could a large body of prisoners reasonably expect to occupy the best rooms in first rate hotels, nor to be entertained in gentlemanly style, and treated daily to Madeira and Champaign. It may be said that, for men to be marched to prison, and to be fed on common food, is a hard lot; and so it is. So it is also, for others to march to the field to capture them, and to live on the same sort of food. The fact is, that, as to marching and diet, the troops and their prisoners have fared alike; and the troops say their supplies have been good and abundant. Supplies equally good and abundant have been continued; and it is enough to say that, since the arrival of the prisoners in Providence, about 200, after all their exposure, privations, and hardships, in the camp at Chepachet, not one has died, or been seriously indisposed. On the whole, take the affair from the commencement to the close, as little abuse, of any description, has been experienced or practised on either side, as could possibly be expected in such a state of public feeling.

And the discharge of a vast proportion of the prisoners certainly does not manifest, on the part of the government, a disposition to persecute those who may have fallen into their hands.

CHAPTER XXIII.

IN penning the foregoing brief narrative, it has been the intention of the author to state nothing but facts ; and he believes he may safely venture to appeal to any member of the Executive Committee of the Suffrage Association, conversant with its affairs from the commencement, to bear him out. The author, though for some years an ardent advocate for a written constitution, and an extension of suffrage, has not been a member of the Suffrage Association since July, 1840 ; nor has he ever filled any office in that body, either as a lecturer, or any thing else. He has acted independently and alone ; and yet has been placed in a situation, in which he has had opportunities to become acquainted with all its movements. With hundreds of others, he boldly advocated, as he still does, the original sovereignty of the people, the source of all political power. But he also recognises the great principle, that force is never to be exercised for redress of grievances, till in the last extremity, all peaceable remedies shall have been applied, and proved ineffectual. It was on this principle, that he re-

monstrated, personally, with Mr. Dorr and others, against all their premature measures relative to a constitution ; deeming it the duty of the suffrage party to await the action of the Landholders' Convention. And when all remonstrance failed, he voted for the People's Constitution as an expression of opinion, as did many hundred others ; and avowed his conviction, that there was no binding force in the act, and that, in the exercise of the same original sovereignty, on which the People's Convention acted, he should feel himself at perfect liberty to vote for any other constitution. Such were the sentiments of many others ; and such the principle on which they acted ; though probably not many of them took the trouble to make the avowal, which, for particular reasons, the writer did make, as many of the suffrage party will have the candor to acknowledge. These remarks may appear egotistical to some, but they have been made in obedience to a different feeling.

The public ought to know, that there is a vast difference between the original suffrage man, and the later adjuncts of the party, converted and initiated since the Autumn of 1840. The former, except such as have been hurried forward by the latter, never dreamed of the exercise of physical force until they should be compelled to resort to it, as the last and only remaining alternative. Many of this class accepted the Landholders' Constitution in March 1842, as a more liberal concession than they had ever demanded. Others, either thinking themselves too far committed with the ultra party, to recede, or affected by the cry

of traitor and apostate, rejected the constitution, and regretted it afterwards. The *politico* suffrage men were led on by a number of persons, very few of whom, as hinted before, had ever stood forward as friends to an extension of suffrage, but who under circumstances of defeat, were willing to take advantage of any movement, to benefit themselves. They were completely ultra in their views, and laid their plans at first, to do by force, what they would not attempt by peaceable means. They were the men who sounded the call "to arms," but who, when the crisis came, were among the missing ; it never having been their object to fight, but to gather up the spoils of victory. Hence, when the entire mass had been thoroughly sifted, very little was left to Mr. Dorr, but the refuse of the force party, which contained not enough of moral principle, to give it power, stability, or courage.

The affair has caused much trouble and alarm, as well as some suffering, and a heavy expense. Yet the result is auspicious, and a full equivalent for all it has cost. It has shown who are ready, on all occasions, to strengthen the ligatures which bind society together.—It has defined the true position of men in the social compact, on the ground of principle and usefulness, independent of extrinsic and fortuitous circumstances of wealth and rank — It has fully verified the truth of the doctrine of the mutual dependence of mankind, in society ; and taught the freeholder and the non-freeholder, that neither can be safe, without the aid of the other ; and while probably a majority

of the non-freeholders, by the promptness with which they have volunteered to sustain the government, have fully proved themselves worthy to participate in its concerns, many of the freeholders, who have heretofore been generally considered the only citizens on whom reliance could be placed, have been most busy in stirring up strife, and lighting the flame of civil war. And last, though not least, it has prepared the way for a good written constitution, with an extension of suffrage perfectly satisfactory to three fourths of the people at least ; and which, without something like the commotion we have passed through, might not have been had for half a century to come. Rhode Island, in the end, has found and tested her own strength, without the aid of the General Government, which was finally proffered and rejected when it was not needed ; and occupies a higher standing than ever, in the view of impartial men of all parties.

CONCLUSION.

The writer will conclude this narrative, with a brief review of some facts connected with the People's Constitution, &c.

The votes for the constitution, in December, 1842, were claimed to be 13,966. If this number were really cast, it no doubt gave a clear majority of the people, of nearly or quite 3000 ; and as few then

knew of any contemplated forcible measures, all that would voluntarily go to the ballot box, and all that could be persuaded to go during three days of voting, and all the names that could be collected during three subsequent days, were represented ; as well as many who were absent, and whose names had been obtained beforehand. Many spurious votes were thus known to have been obtained ; and how many more were cast could not be known, without canvassing the entire state anew by means of sworn officers ; because not a clerk or other officer attending any of the meetings, was sworn. Of course there was nothing like record evidence to legalise a single return of votes, had all the other proceedings been legal. Such returns would have been rejected by any conventional, judicial, or legislative body, in the Union, even in case of an ordinary election ; yet such were the returns, furnishing the *only* evidence that the People's Constitution had received the major vote of the people. True, the returns were offered to the General Assembly, for them to test. But they would have had to canvas the entire state to do it, and which would have been precisely equivalent to admitting the legality of the convention and its proceedings. This, they would not do. Notwithstanding, therefore, all that has been said on the subject, it never was known, and never can be known, from any existing legal evidence, or any that could be reduced to legal form, that the People's Constitution did receive the votes of a majority of the people of Rhode Island.

Subsequently, a large number who had voted for

that constitution, quit the ranks of the party, and voted for the other constitution, in March, 1842. In the contest, all that the party in favor of the People's Constitution could muster to defeat the other, including 800 men opposed to both, and as many more of the same description who did not vote at all, was but about 9000. The rest, by their votes, repudiated the People's Constitution, and showed themselves to be satisfied with the other. But there was to come another test, and still another, of the validity of the declaration uttered by the People's Convention — **"THE CONSTITUTION IS ADOPTED, AND SHALL BE MAINTAINED."** If the majority had really, in what they considered a binding manner, adopted the constitution, they would sustain that declaration. If they would not, and chose, in the exercise of their original sovereign capacity, to sustain another government, there was an end to the People's Constitution ; and a legitimate end too, of which none can complain ; because such was the doctrine of the convention itself. Well ; preparation was made to maintain the constitution by force, and what has been the issue ?

Much as has been said about the arbitrary and overbearing spirit of those who have opposed Mr. Dorr and his friends in their attempts at revolution ; but there is one remarkable fact that stands out in bold relief, and would seem to contradict the oft repeated assertion. Mr. Dorr and his friends boldly declared their intention, to be, to appeal to arms, unless the General Assembly gave up the government to them. Yet, without molestation or hindrance, they were per-

mitted to collect all the men they could, to organise and drill them as a military force, to arm and equip them in open day, to call them into the field with the avowed purpose of overturning the government, and finally, to encamp themselves in the most populous place in the state. And after all, when those troops were marched up to attack an overwhelming force, these arbitrary landholders and tyrants looked calmly and patiently on, awaiting the first shot, determined not to spill the first blood. And then they permitted the conquered party to retire, unmolested, to their homes. Mr. Dorr, in two months, had collected two hundred and fifty men. Governor King, had called together eight hundred ; and might, if necessary, have had as many thousands.

Again Mr. Dorr made an effort to rally. His forces now mustered and drilled in any part of the state they chose, and procured arms and ammunition where and how they pleased ; and no one disturbed them. They were also allowed to entrench themselves again in a new and strong position ; and when Mr. Dorr had swelled his force as much as it seemed possible to do, he could number a host of eight hundred men. The arbitrary tyrants then very obligingly gave Mr. Dorr and his men a chance to learn with what number of men, and with what advantages, they were to be attacked, and they might, at their option, either run away, or stay and be cut to pieces. They preferred to run away ; and then again, in the exercise of their arbitrary tyranny, the authorities have dismissed, without punishment, more than three fourths of

all their captives. In the end, Mr. Dorr, became satisfied, that a majority of the people of Rhode Island will not sustain, and do not wish to see established, the People's Constitution, and a government under it. The only coercive measures adopted by the legislative authority, from the commencement, except to arm the people and to call them into the field for *defence*, was the law which its opponents call the *Álgerine Law*. And even that affected persons only who took office under the new Government, while the people were left to act as they pleased. The whole presents one of the most singular pictures of tyranny of which we have ever heard or read.

APPENDIX.

SECOND LETTER OF PRESIDENT TYLER.

BY HIS EXCELLENCY

SAMUEL WARD KING,

*Governor, Captain General, and Commander-in-Chief of
the State of Rhode Island and Providence Planta-
tions.*

A PROCLAMATION.

Whereas, the President of the United States has transmitted to me a communication touching the political affairs of this State, a copy whereof is hereunto annexed :

I do therefore issue this my Proclamation, to make known the same to the People of this State, and more especially to those engaged in treasonable enterprise against the Laws and Government thereof, that they may give heed thereto, and govern themselves accordingly.

In testimony whereof, I have caused the seal of said State to be affixed to these Presents, and have signed the same with my hand. Given at New-
[L. s.] port, on the eleventh day of May, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty-two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the sixty-sixth.

SAMUEL WARD KING.

By his Excellency's command :

HENRY BOWEN, *Secretary of State.*

To the Governor of the State of Rhode Island.

WASHINGTON CITY, MAY 7, 1842.

SIR, — Your letter of the 4th inst., transmitting Resolutions of the Legislature of Rhode Island, informing me that there existed in that State "certain lawless assemblages of a portion of the people," for the purpose of subverting the laws and overthrowing the existing Government, and calling upon the Executive "forthwith to interpose the power and authority of the United States to suppress such insurrectionary and lawless assemblages, and to support the existing government and laws, and protect the State from domestic violence," was handed me on yesterday, by Messrs. Randolph and Potter.

I have to inform your Excellency in reply, that my opinions as to the duties of this Government to protect the State of Rhode Island against domestic violence, remain unchanged. Yet, from information received by the Executive since your despatches came to hand, I am led to believe that the lawless assemblages to which reference is made, have already dispersed, and that the danger of domestic violence is hourly diminishing, if it has not wholly disappeared. I have with difficulty brought myself at any time to believe, that violence would be resorted to, or an exigency arise, which the unaided power of the State could not meet; especially as I have from the first felt persuaded, that your Excellency, as well as others associated with yourself in the administration of the government, would exhibit a temper of conciliation as well as of energy and decision. To the insurgents themselves it ought to be obvious, when the excitement of the moment shall have passed away, that changes achieved by regular, and, if necessary, repeated appeals to the constituted authorities, in a country so much under the influence of public opinion, and by recourse to argument and remonstrance, are more likely to ensure lasting blessings than those accomplished by violence and bloodshed on one day, and liable to overthrow by similar agents on another.

I freely confess that I should experience great reluctance in employing the military power of this Govern-

ment against any portion of the people; but, however painful the duty, I have to assure your Excellency, that if resistance is made to the execution of the laws of Rhode Island, by such force as the *civil posse* shall be unable to overcome, it will be the duty of this Government to enforce the constitutional guarantee — a guarantee given and adopted mutually by all the original States, of which Rhode Island was one, and which, in the same way, has been given and adopted by each of the States since admitted into the Union. And if any exigency of lawless violence shall actually arise, the Executive Government of the United States, on the application of your Excellency, under the authority of the resolutions of the Legislature already transmitted, will stand ready to succor the authorities of the State in their efforts to maintain a due respect for the laws. I sincerely hope, however, that no such exigency may occur, and that every citizen of Rhode Island will manifest his love of peace and good order, by submitting to the laws, and seeking a redress of grievances by other means than intestine commotions.

I tender to your Excellency assurances of my distinguished consideration.

JOHN TYLER.

The following are the portions of the People's Constitution, so called, which embrace the material subjects of dispute between the contending parties.

WE, the PEOPLE of the STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS, grateful to Almighty God for his blessing vouchsafed to the "lively experiment" of Religious and Political Freedom here "held forth" by our venerated ancestors, and earnestly imploring the favor of his gracious Providence toward this our attempt to secure, upon a permanent foundation, the advantages of well ordered and rational Liberty, and to enlarge and transmit to our successors the inheritance that we have received, do ordain and establish the following CONSTITUTION of Government for this State.

ARTICLE I.

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES AND RIGHTS.

1. In the spirit and in the words of ROGER WILLIAMS, the illustrious Founder of this State, and of his venerated associates, WE DECLARE, "that this government shall be a DEMOCRACY," or government of the PEOPLE, "by the major consent" of the same, "ONLY IN CIVIL THINGS." The will of the people shall be expressed by Representatives freely chosen, and returning at fixed periods to their constituents. This State shall be, and forever remain, as in the design of its founder; sacred to "SOUL LIBERTY," to the rights of conscience, to freedom of thought, of expression and of action, as hereinafter set forth and secured.

2. All men are created free and equal, and are endowed by their Creator with certain natural, inherent and inalienable Rights; among which are life, liberty, the acquisition of property, and the pursuit of happiness. Government cannot create or bestow these rights, which are the gift of God; but it is instituted for the stronger and surer defence of the same; that men may safely enjoy the rights of life and liberty, securely possess and transmit property, and, so far as laws avail, may be successful in the pursuit of happiness.

3. All political power and sovereignty are originally vested in, and of right belong to the PEOPLE. All free governments are founded in their authority, and are established for the greatest good of the whole number. The PEOPLE have therefore an inalienable and indefeasible right, in their original, sovereign and unlimited capacity, to ordain and institute government, and, in the same capacity, to alter, reform, or totally change the same, whenever their safety or happiness requires.

4. No favor or disfavor ought to be shown in legislation toward any man, or party, or society, or religious denomination. The laws should be made not for the good of the few, but of the many; and the burdens of the State ought to be fairly distributed among its citizens.

5. The diffusion of useful knowledge, and the culti-

vation of a sound morality, in the fear of God, being of the first importance in a Republican State, and indispensable to the maintenance of its liberty, it shall be an imperative duty of the Legislature to promote the establishment of Free Schools, and to assist in the support of Public Education.

6. Every person in this State ought to find a certain remedy, by having recourse to the laws, for all injuries or wrongs which may be done to his rights of person, property or character. He ought to obtain right and justice freely and without purchase, completely and without denial, promptly and without delay, conformably to the laws.

7. The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers and possessions, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated; and no warrant shall issue but on complaint in writing upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and describing, as nearly as may be, the place to be searched, and the person or things to be seized.

8. No person shall be held to answer to a capital or other infamous charge, unless on indictment by a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia, when in actual service, in time of war or public danger. — No person shall be tried, after an acquittal, for the same crime or offence.

9. Every man being presumed to be innocent, until pronounced guilty by the law, all acts of severity, that are not necessary to secure an accused person, ought to be repressed.

10. Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel or unusual punishments inflicted; and all punishments ought to be proportioned to the offence.

11. All prisoners shall be bailable upon sufficient surety, unless for capital offences, when the proof is evident, or the presumption great. The privilege of the writ of Habeas Corpus shall not be suspended, unless when, in cases of rebellion, or invasion, the public safety shall require it.

12. In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall

have the privilege of a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury; be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; be confronted with the witnesses against him; have compulsory process to obtain them in his favor, and at the public expense, when necessary; have the assistance of counsel in his defence, and be at liberty to speak for himself. Nor shall he be deprived of his life, liberty or property, unless by the judgment of his peers, or the law of the land.

13. The right of trial, by jury, shall remain inviolate; and in all criminal cases the jury shall judge both of the law and of the facts.

14. Any person in this State, who may be claimed, to be held to labor or service, under the laws of any other State, territory, or district, shall be entitled to a jury trial, to ascertain the validity of such claim.

15. No man in a Court of common law shall be required to criminate himself.

16. Retrospective laws, civil and criminal, are unjust and oppressive, and shall not be made.

17. The People have a right to assemble in a peaceable manner, without molestation or restraint, to consult upon the public welfare; a right to give instructions to their Senators and Representatives; and a right to apply to those invested with the powers of Government for redress of grievances, for the repeal of injurious laws, for the correction of faults of administration, and for all other purposes.

18. The liberty of the Press being essential to the security of freedom in a State, any citizen may publish his sentiments on any subject, being responsible for the abuse of that liberty; and in all trials for libel, both civil and criminal, the truth, spoken from good motives and for justifiable ends, shall be a sufficient defence to the person charged.

19. Private property shall not be taken for public uses without just compensation; nor unless the public good require it; nor under any circumstances until compensation shall have been made, if required.

20. The military shall always be held in strict subordination to the civil authority.

21. No soldier shall, in time of peace, be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner; nor in time of war but in manner to be prescribed by law.

22. Whereas Almighty God hath created the mind free, and all attempts to influence it by temporal punishments, or burdens, or by civil incapacitations, tend to beget habits of hypocrisy and meanness; and whereas a principal object of our venerated ancestors in their migration to this country, and their settlement of this State, was, as they expressed it, to hold forth a lively experiment, that a flourishing civil State may stand, and be best maintained, with full liberty in religious concerns. We therefore DECLARE, that no man shall be compelled to frequent, or support any religious worship, place or ministry whatsoever, nor be enforced, restrained, molested, or burdened in his body and goods, nor disqualified from holding any office, nor otherwise suffer on account of his religious belief; and that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion; and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge or affect their civil capacities; and that all other religious rights and privileges of the people of this State, as now enjoyed, shall remain inviolate and inviolable.

23. No witness shall be called in question before the Legislature, nor in any Court of this State, nor before any magistrate, or other person, authorized to administer an oath, or affirmation, for his or her religious belief, or opinions, or any part thereof; and no objection to a witness, on the ground of his or her religious opinions, shall be entertained or received.

24. The citizens shall continue to enjoy and freely exercise all the rights of fishery, and privileges of the shore to which they have been heretofore entitled under the charter and usages of this State.

25. The enumeration of the foregoing rights shall not be construed to impair or deny others retained by the people.

ARTICLE II.

OF ELECTORS AND THE RIGHT OF SUFFRAGE.

1. Every white male citizen of the United States, of

the age of twenty-one years, who has resided in this State for one year, and in any town, city, or district of the same for six months, next preceding the election at which he offers to vote, shall be an elector of all officers, who are elected, or may hereafter be made eligible by the People. But persons in the military, naval, or marine service of the United States shall not be considered as having such established residence, by being stationed in any garrison, barrack, or military place, in any town or city in this State.

2. Paupers and persons under guardianship, insane, or lunatic, are excluded from the electoral right; and the same shall be forfeited on conviction of bribery, forgery, perjury, theft, or other infamous crime, and shall not be restored unless by an act of the General Assembly.

3. No person, who is excluded from voting, for want of the qualification first named in section first of this article, shall be taxed, or be liable to do military duty; provided that nothing in said first article shall be so construed as to exempt from taxation any property or persons now liable to be taxed.

4. No elector who is not possessed of, and assessed for ratable property, in his own right, to the amount of one hundred and fifty dollars, or who shall have neglected, or refused to pay any tax assessed upon him, in any town, city, or district, for one year preceding the town, city, ward, or district meeting, at which he shall offer to vote, shall be entitled to vote on any question of taxation, or the expenditure of any public moneys in such town, city, or district, until the same be paid.

5. In the city of Providence, and other cities, no person shall be eligible to the office of mayor, alderman, or common council man, who is not taxed, or who shall have neglected or refused to pay his tax, as provided in the preceding section.

6. The voting for all officers chosen by the People, except town or city officers, shall be by ballot; that is to say, by depositing a written or printed ticket in the ballot box, without the name of the voter written thereon. Town or city officers shall be chosen by ballot, on the demand of any two persons entitled to vote for the same.

7. There shall be a strict registration of all qualified voters in the towns and cities of the State; and no person shall be permitted to vote, whose name has not been entered upon the list of voters before the polls are opened.

8. The General Assembly shall pass all necessary laws for the prevention of fraudulent voting by persons not having an actual, permanent residence, or home, in the State, or otherwise disqualified according to this Constitution; for the careful registration of all voters, previously to the time of voting; for the prevention of frauds upon the ballot box; for the preservation of the purity of elections; and for the safe keeping and accurate counting of the votes, to the end that the will of the People may be freely and fully expressed, truly ascertained, and effectually exerted, without intimidation, suppression, or unnecessary delay.

9. The electors shall be exempted from arrest on days of election, and one day before, and one day after the same, except in cases of treason, felony, or breach of the peace.

10. No person shall be eligible to any office by the votes of the People, who does not possess the qualification of an elector.

ARTICLE V.

OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

1. The House of Representatives shall consist of members chosen by the electors in the several towns and cities, in their respective town and ward meetings, annually.

2. The Towns and Cities shall severally be entitled to elect members, according to the appointment which follows, viz:—Newport to elect five; Warwick, four; Smithfield, five; Cumberland, North Providence and Scituate, three; Portsmouth, Westerly, New Shoreham, North Kingstown, South Kingstown, East Greenwich, Glocester, West Greenwich, Coventry, Exeter, Bristol, Tiverton, Little Compton, Warren, Richmond, Cranston, Charlestown, Hopkinton, Johnston, Foster and Burrill-

ville, to elect two; and Jamestown, Middletown and Barrington, to elect one.

3. In the city of Providence there shall be six Representative Districts, which shall be the six wards of said city. And the electors resident in said districts, for the term of three months, next preceding the election, at which they offer to vote, shall be entitled to elect two Representatives for each district.

4. The General Assembly, in case of great inequality in the population of the wards of the city of Providence, may cause the boundaries of the six Representative districts therein to be so altered as to include in each district, as nearly as may be, an equal number of inhabitants.

5. The House of Representatives shall have authority to elect their own Speaker, clerks and other officers. The oath of office shall be administered to the Speaker by the Secretary of State, or, in his absence, by the Attorney General.

6. Whenever the seat of a member of the House of Representatives shall be vacated by death, resignation, or otherwise, the vacancy may be filled by a new election.

ARTICLE VI.

OF THE SENATE.

1. The State shall be divided into twelve Senatorial Districts; and each district shall be entitled to one Senator, who shall be annually chosen by the electors in his district.

2. The first, second and third Representative Districts in the City of Providence shall constitute the first Senatorial District; the fourth, fifth and sixth Representative Districts in said City, the second District; the Town of Smithfield, the third District; the Towns of North Providence and Cumberland, the fourth District; the Towns of Scituate, Glocester, Burrillville and Johnston, the fifth District; the Towns of Warwick and Cranston, the sixth District; the Towns of East Greenwich, West Greenwich, Coventry and Foster, the seventh District; the Towns of Newport, Jamestown and New Shoreham, the eighth District; the Towns of Portsmouth, Middle-

town, Tiverton and Little Compton, the ninth District ; the Towns of North Kingstown, and South Kingstown, the tenth District ; the Towns of Westerly, Charlestown, Exeter, Richmond and Hopkinton, the eleventh District ; the Towns of Bristol, Warren and Barrington, the twelfth District.

3. The Lieutenant Governor shall be, by virtue of his office, President of the Senate ; and shall have a right, in case of an equal division, to vote in the same ; and also to vote in joint committee of the two Houses.

4. When the Government shall be administered by the Lieutenant Governor, or he shall be unable to attend as President of the Senate, the Senate shall elect one of their own members President of the same.

5. Vacancies in the Senate, occasioned by death, resignation, or otherwise, may be filled by a new election.

6. The Secretary of the State shall be, by virtue of his office, Secretary of the Senate.

ARTICLE XII.

AMENDMENTS.

The General Assembly may propose amendments to this Constitution by the vote of a majority of all the members elected to each House. Such propositions shall be published in the newspapers of the State ; and printed copies of said propositions shall be sent by the Secretary of State, with the names of all the members who shall have voted thereon, with the yeas and nays, to all the town and city clerks in the State ; and the said proposition shall be by said clerks inserted in the notices, by them issued, for warning the next annual town and ward meetings in April, and the town and ward clerks shall read said propositions to the electors when thus assembled, with the names of all the Representatives and Senators who shall have voted thereon, with the yeas and nays, before the election of Representatives and Senators shall be had. If a majority of all the members elected at said annual meetings, present in each House, shall approve any proposition thus made, the same shall be published, as before provided, and then sent to the electors

in the mode provided in the act of approval; and, if then approved by a majority of the electors who shall vote in town and ward meetings, to be specially convened for that purpose, it shall become a part of the Constitution of the State.

The following extracts embrace the principal points in dispute in the Landholders' Constitution, between the two parties.

WE, the People of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the government thereof.

ARTICLE FIRST.

DECLARATIONS OF CERTAIN CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS AND PRINCIPLES.

In order effectually to secure the religious and political freedom established here by our venerated ancestors, and to preserve the same for their posterity, we do declare that the inherent, essential, and unquestionable rights and principles hereinafter mentioned, among others shall be established, maintained and preserved, and shall be of paramount obligation in all legislative, judicial and executive proceedings.

Section 1. Every person, within this State, ought to find a certain remedy, by having recourse to the laws, for all injuries or wrongs which he may receive in his person, property or character. He ought to obtain right and justice freely, and without being obliged to purchase it, completely and without denial, promptly and without delay; conformably to the laws.

Sec. 2. The right of the people to be secure in their persons, papers and possessions, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated; and no warrant shall issue, but on complaint in writing, upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and describing as nearly as may be, the place to be searched and the persons or things to be seized.

Sec. 3. No person shall be holden to answer for a capital or other infamous crime, unless on presentment or indictment by a grand jury, except in cases of impeachment, or such offences as are usually cognizable by a justice of the peace; or in cases arising in the land and naval forces, or in the militia, when in actual service in time of war or public danger. No person shall be tried, after an acquittal, for the same offence.

Sec. 4. Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel punishments inflicted; and all punishments ought to be proportioned to the offence.

Sec. 5. All persons imprisoned ought to be bailable by sufficient sureties, unless, for capital offences, when the proof is evident, or the presumption great. The privilege of the writ of habeas corpus shall not be suspended, unless when in cases of rebellion or invasion the public safety shall require it; nor then without the authority of the General Assembly.

Sec. 6. In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the privilege of a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury; to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation, to be confronted with the witnesses against him, to have compulsory process for obtaining them in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel in his defence, and be at liberty to speak for himself; nor shall he be deprived of life, liberty or property, unless by the judgment of his peers, or the law of the land.

Sec. 7. The person of a debtor, where there is not strong presumption of fraud, ought not to be continued in prison, after he shall have delivered up his property for the benefit of his creditors, in such manner as shall be prescribed by law.

Sec. 8. No ex post facto law, or law impairing the obligation of contracts, shall be made.

Sec. 9. No man in a court of common law shall be compelled to give evidence criminating himself.

Sec. 10. Every man being presumed innocent, until pronounced guilty by the law, all acts of severity, that are not necessary to secure an accused person, shall be repressed,

Sec. 11. The right of trial by jury shall remain inviolate.

Sec. 12. Private property shall not be taken for public uses, without just compensation.

Sec. 13. The citizens shall continue to enjoy and freely exercise the rights of fishery, and all other rights to which they have been heretofore entitled under the charter of this State, except as is herein otherwise provided.

Sec. 14. The military shall always be held in strict subordination to the civil authority.

Sec. 15. No soldier, shall in time of peace, be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner; nor, in time of war, but in manner prescribed by law.

Sec. 16. The liberty of the press being essential to the security of freedom in a State, any person may publish his sentiments on any subject, being responsible for the abuse of that liberty; and in all trials for libel, both civil and criminal, the truth, unless published from malicious motives, shall be a sufficient defence to the person charged.

Sec. 17. The citizens have a right in a peaceable manner to assemble for their common good, and to apply to those invested with the powers of Government, for redress of grievances, or other purposes, by petition, address or remonstrance.

Sec. 18. The right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.

Sec. 19. Slavery shall not be tolerated in this State.

Sec. 20. Whereas Almighty God hath created the mind free: and all attempts to influence it, by temporal punishments or burthens, or by civil incapacitations, tend to beget habits of hypocrisy and meanness: and whereas a principal object of our venerable ancestors, in their migrations to this country, and their settlement of this State, was, as they expressed it, to hold forth a lively experiment, that a flourishing civil state, may stand, and be best maintained, with full liberty in religious concerns; We therefore declare that no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place or ministry whatever; nor enforced, re-

strained, molested or burthened in his body or goods; nor disqualified from holding any office; nor otherwise suffer, on account of his religious belief. And that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain their opinion in matters of religion; and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge or affect their civil capacities.

Sec. 21. The enumeration of the foregoing rights shall not be construed to impair or deny others retained by the people.

ARTICLE SECOND.

OF THE RIGHT OF SUFFRAGE.

Section 1. Every person who is now a freeman and qualified voter, shall continue to be so, so long as he retains the qualifications upon which he was admitted.

Sec. 2. Hereafter, every white male native citizen of the United States, or any territory thereof, of the full age of twenty-one years, who shall have had his actual permanent residence and home in this State, for the period of one year, and in the town or city in which he may claim a right to vote, six months next preceding the time of voting, and shall be seized in his own right, of a freehold real estate in such town or city, of the value, at least, of one hundred and thirty-four dollars, over and above all incumbrances, shall therefrom have a right to vote in the election of all civil officers, and on all questions in all legal town or ward meetings.

Sec. 3. Every white male native citizen of the United States or any territory thereof, of the full age of twenty-one years, who shall have had his actual permanent residence and home in this State for the period of two years, and in the town or city, in which he may claim a right to vote, six months, next preceding the time of voting, shall have a right to vote in the election of all civil officers, and on all questions, in all legal town or ward meetings: *Provided, however*, that no person who is not now a freeman, shall be allowed to vote upon any motion to impose a tax, or incur expenditures, in any town or city, unless he possess the freehold qualification required by this article; or shall have been taxed on property

valued, at least, at one hundred and fifty dollars, within one year from the time he may offer to vote, and shall have paid such tax in said town or city.

Sec. 4. Any white male native of any foreign country of the full age of twenty-one years, naturalized in the United States according to law, who shall have had his actual permanent residence and home in this State for the period of three years after his naturalization, and in the town or city in which he may claim a right to vote, six months next preceding the time of voting, and shall be seized in his own right, of a freehold real estate, in such town or city, of the value, at least, of one hundred and thirty-four dollars, over and above all incumbrances, shall, therefrom, have a right to vote in the election of all civil officers, and in all questions in all town or ward meetings. But no person in the military, naval, marine, or any other service of the United States, shall be considered as having the desired residences by reason of being employed in any garrison, barrack, or military or naval station in this State. And no pauper, lunatic, or person non compos mentis, or under guardianship, shall be permitted to vote; nor shall any person convicted of any crime, deemed infamous at common law, be permitted to exercise that privilege, until he be restored thereto by the General Assembly. Persons residing on land ceded by this State to the United States, shall not be entitled to exercise the privilege of electors during such residence.

Sec. 5. The General Assembly shall, as soon as may be after the adoption of this Constitution, provide for the registration of voters; and shall also have full power generally to enact all laws necessary to carry this article into effect, and to prevent abuse and fraud in voting.

Sec. 6. All persons entitled to vote shall be protected from arrest in civil cases, on the days of election, and on the day preceding, and the day following an election.

Sec. 7. In the city of Providence and all other cities, no person shall be eligible to the office of mayor, alderman, or common councilman, who is not qualified to vote upon a motion to impose a tax or incur expenditures as herein provided.

Sec. 8. The General Assembly shall have power to provide, by special or general laws, for the admission of any native male citizen of the United States, or any territory, who shall have had his permanent residence and home in this State for two years, but who is not otherwise qualified under this article, to vote on such conditions as they may deem proper, except for taxes and expenditures.

ARTICLE FIFTH.

OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Section 1. The House of Representatives shall consist of members elected by the Electors of the several towns and cities in the respective town and ward meetings. Each town or city having four thousand inhabitants, and under six thousand five hundred, shall be entitled to elect three Representatives; each town or city having six thousand five hundred inhabitants, and under ten thousand, shall be entitled to elect four Representatives; each town or city having ten thousand inhabitants, and under fourteen thousand, shall be entitled to elect five Representatives; each town or city having fourteen thousand inhabitants, and under eighteen thousand, shall be entitled to elect six Representatives; each town or city having eighteen thousand inhabitants, and under twenty-one thousand, shall be entitled to elect seven Representatives; each town or city having over twenty-one thousand inhabitants, shall be entitled to elect eight Representatives. But no town or city shall be entitled to elect more than eight Representatives; and every town or city shall be entitled to elect two. The Representation of the several towns and cities in this State shall be apportioned agreeable to the last census of the people of the United States, preceding the election.

Sec. 2. The House of Representatives shall have authority to elect its Speaker, Clerks, and other officers. The oath of office shall be administered by the Secretary of State, or in his absence, by the Attorney General. The Clerks shall be engaged by the Speaker.

Sec. 3. Whenever the seat of a member of the House

of Representatives shall be vacated by death, resignation, or otherwise, the vacancy may be filled by a new election.

Sec. 4. The senior member from the town of Newport, present, shall preside in the organization of the House.

ARTICLE SIXTH.

OF THE SENATE.

Section 1. The Senate shall consist of nineteen members, to be chosen annually by the majority of electors, by districts. The State shall be divided into sixteen districts, as follows:

First. The town of Newport shall constitute the first Senatorial district, and shall be entitled to elect two Senators.

Second. The towns of Portsmouth, Middletown, Tiverton, Little Compton, New Shoreham, and Jamestown, shall constitute the second Senatorial district, and shall be entitled to elect two Senators.

Third. The city of Providence, shall constitute the third Senatorial district, and shall be entitled to elect two Senators.

Fourth. The town of Smithfield shall constitute the fourth Senatorial district, and shall be entitled to elect one Senator.

Fifth. The towns of Cumberland and North Providence, shall constitute the fifth Senatorial district, and shall be entitled to elect one Senator.

Sixth. The towns of Scituate, Cranston, and Johnston, shall constitute the sixth Senatorial district, and shall be entitled to elect one Senator,

Seventh. The towns of Glocester, Foster and Burrillville, shall constitute the seventh Senatorial district, and shall be entitled to elect one Senator.

Eighth. The town of South Kingston, shall constitute the eighth Senatorial district, and shall be entitled to elect one Senator.

Ninth. The towns of Westerly and Charlestown shall constitute the ninth Senatorial district, and shall be entitled to elect one Senator.

Tenth. The towns of Hopkinton and Richmond, shall constitute the tenth Senatorial district, and shall be entitled to elect one Senator.

Eleventh. The towns of North Kingston and Exeter shall constitute the eleventh Senatorial district, and shall be entitled to elect one Senator.

Twelfth. The town of Bristol shall constitute the twelfth Senatorial district, and shall be entitled to elect one Senator.

Thirteenth. The towns of Warren and Barrington shall constitute the thirteenth Senatorial district, and shall be entitled to elect one Senator.

Fourteenth. The towns of East Greenwich and West Greenwich shall constitute the fourteenth Senatorial district, and shall be entitled to elect one Senator.

Fifteenth. The town of Coventry shall constitute the fifteenth Senatorial district, and shall be entitled to elect one Senator.

Sixteenth. The town of Warwick shall constitute the sixteenth Senatorial district, and shall be entitled to elect one Senator.

And no more than one Senator shall be elected from any town for the same term, in the second Senatorial district.

Sec. 2. The Lieutenant Governor shall ex-officio be a member of the Senate.

The Secretary of State shall be by virtue of his office Secretary of the Senate, unless otherwise provided by law, and the Senate may elect such other officers as they may deem necessary.

Sec. 3. If, by reason of death, resignation, or absence there be no Governor or Lieutenant Governor present, to preside in the Senate, the Senate shall elect one of their own number to preside, until the Governor or Lieutenant Governor returns, or until one of said offices is filled according to this Constitution, and until such election is made by the Senate, the Secretary of State shall preside.

ARTICLE THIRTEENTH.

OF AMENDMENTS.

The General Assembly may propose amendments to this Constitution by the votes of a majority of all the members elected to each House. Such propositions shall be published in the newspapers, and printed copies of said propositions shall be sent by the Secretary of State, with the names of all the members who shall have voted thereon, with the yeas and nays, to all the town and city clerks in the State; and the said propositions shall be, by said Clerks, inserted in the warrants or notices by them issued, for warning the next annual town and ward meetings in April; and the Clerks shall read said propositions to the Electors when thus assembled, with the names of all the Representatives and Senators who shall have voted thereon, with the yeas and nays, before the election of Representatives and Senators shall be had. If a majority of all the members elected to each House, at said annual meeting, shall approve any proposition thus made, the same shall be published and sent to the electors in the mode provided in the act of approval; and if then approved by three fifths of the electors of the State present, and voting thereon in town and ward meetings, it shall become a part of the Constitution of the State.

The following resolutions were adopted at a meeting of the Ultra Suffrage Party, held on the Court House Parade, Providence, on Thursday afternoon, May 12th, 1842.

Resolved, That we will submit to no compromise that has not for its basis an acknowledgment that the ultimate source of all political and sovereign power [rests*] in the whole male citizens of the State; and that no action of the legislative authority is, or of right can be, necessary

* In the published copies, "*does not rest*."

to say when or how that ultimate sovereign power may be exercised.

Resolved, That we will maintain these principles, as those purchased with the blood and counsels of our fathers of '76, to the last.

Resolved, That we believe the intent for which the Algerine Law was enacted, was to provoke an outbreak; and that all action of the Tyrants under it, has been to seek to spill the blood of the people. That we regard said law as a tyrannical act of an expiring despotism, designed to guard and sacrifice the people, and in fine, that it is an avowed, an open declaration of war.*

Resolved, That should another attempt be made to arrest an individual under that law, we hereby pledge ourselves in the most solemn manner, to shield such person from arrest; and if arrested, or kidnapped, to rescue him from the demon who may pretend to hold him in custody, and to immediately visit such retributive justice† to the offenders, as the enormity of their crimes may demand.

Resolved, That we will support, protect, and defend Gov. Thomas W. Dorr, to the last—that we will neither surrender him to the malice of his opponents, nor will we ever forget the firmness and wisdom, as well as the moderation, which has marked his bearing to us and his opponents, during all this excited war for liberty.

Copy of the Petition of Elisha Dillingham and about six hundred others, presented to the General Assembly at the January session, 1841.

To the Honorable the General Assembly of the State of Rhode Island.

The undersigned, inhabitants and citizens of the State

* It will be recollected that the Suffrage Party had already rejected a Constitution providing for a more extended suffrage than they had ever demanded.

† By the intelligent mind, it may readily be conjectured what IMMEDIATE "*retributive justice*" was intended.

of Rhode Island, would respectfully represent to your Honorable Body, that they conceive that the dignity of the State would be advanced, and the liberties of the citizen better secured, by the abrogation of the Charter granted unto this State by King Charles the Second of England, and by the establishment of a Constitution which should more effectually define the authority of the Executive and Legislative branches, and more strongly recognize the rights of the citizens. Your petitioners would not take the liberty of suggesting to your Honorable Body, any course which should be pursued, but would leave the whole affair in your hands, trusting to the good sense and discretion of the General Assembly.

Your petitioners would farther represent to the General Assembly, that they conceive that an extension of suffrage, to a greater portion of the white male residents of the State, would be more in accordance with the spirit of our institutions, than the present system of the State; and for such an extension they ask.

Your petitioners would not suggest any system of suffrage, but would leave the matter to the wisdom of the General Assembly.

Upon both the prayers of your petitioners, they would ask the immediate and efficient action of the General Assembly, and as in duty bound will ever pray.

Signed by ELISHA DILLINGHAM, and about 580 others.

The following is a copy of the doings of the General Assembly, at the above session, relative to a Convention.

At the January session of the General Assembly, 1841, a memorial from the town of Smithfield, was referred to a select committee of the House of Representatives, of which the Hon. Asher Robbins was chairman, who, in behalf of said committee, reported as follows :

“ The select committee to whom was referred the memorial of the town of Smithfield, praying this General Assembly to take the subject of the extreme inequality of the present representation from the several towns under consideration, and in such manner as seems most

practicable and just to correct the evil complained of," have had the same under consideration, and the committee believing that the regular and rightful way of obtaining the object prayed for, is by a Convention of the freemen of the State, acting in their sovereign capacity on the subject, report the following resolution for adoption :

Resolved, by the General Assembly, (the Senate concurring with the House of Representatives therein,) that it be recommended to the freemen of the State at the several town meetings in April, to instruct their Representatives as to their wishes for a State Convention to frame a new Constitution for this State, in whole or in part, with full power for that purpose."

After some remarks from several members, on motion of Mr. Robbins, on the fifth of February, 1841, this resolution was recommitted to report in the morning, and the report was made the order of the day for the morrow. On the next day the memorial of the town of Smithfield was taken up, and the resolution as amended by the committee, and after considerable debate on the question, whether the freemen should be called upon first to instruct their Representatives on the subject of calling a Convention, or whether the General Assembly should pass a bill as heretofore immediately for calling a Convention—the latter course was adopted. Resolutions were then passed by this General Assembly, requesting the freemen to choose, in August, delegates to attend a Convention to be holden at Providence, on the first Monday of November, A. D. 1841, to frame a new Constitution for this State, either in whole or in part, with full power for this purpose, and if only for a Constitution in part, that said Convention have under their especial consideration the expediency of equalizing the representations of the towns in the House of Representatives.

The following are the Resolutions, together with what its opponents call the "Algerine Law," passed by the

General Assembly at the (extra) Session, March, 1842.

Resolved, That his Excellency the Governor, be requested to issue his proclamation to the good people of this State, exhorting them to give no aid or countenance to those who, in violation of the law, may attempt to set up a government in opposition to the existing government of this State, and calling upon them to support the constituted authorities for the preservation of the public peace, and the execution of those laws on which the security of all depends.

Resolved, That the report, and the act accompanying be published in all the newspapers in this State, that copies be printed in pamphlet form, and that the Secretary of State cause the same to be forthwith distributed in the several towns of this state and the city of Providence, and that copies of the same be sent to the Governors of each State, and a copy each to the President, Vice President, members of the Cabinet, Senators and members of the House of Representatives of the United States.

Resolved, That his Excellency be, and he is hereby authorized to adopt such measures as in his opinion may be necessary in the recess of this legislature, to execute the laws and preserve the State from domestic violence, and that he be, and is hereby authorized to draw on the General Treasurer for such sums as may be required for these purposes.

AN ACT in relation to offences against the Sovereign power of this State.

Whereas, in a free government it is especially necessary that the duties of the citizen to the constituted authorities should be plainly defined, so that none may confound our regulated American liberty with unbridled license; and whereas, certain artful and ill-disposed persons, have for some time past, been busy with false pretences amongst the good people of this State, and have formed and are now endeavoring to carry through a plan for the subversion of our government under assumed forms of law, but in plain violation of the first principles

of constitutional right, and many have been deceived thereby: and whereas this General Assembly at the same time that it is desirous to awaken the honest and well meaning to a sense of their duty, is resolved by all necessary means to guard the safety and honor of the state, and overlooking what is past, to punish such evil doers in future, in a manner due to their offences:

Be it enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

SECTION 1. All town, ward or other meetings of the freemen, inhabitants, or residents of this state, or of any portion of the same, for the election of any town, county or state officer or officers, called or held in any town, of this state or in the city of Providence, except in the manner, for the purposes, at the times, and by the freemen by law prescribed, are illegal and void: and that any person or persons who shall act as moderator or moderators, warden or wardens, clerk or clerks, in such pretended town, ward or other meetings hereafter to be ~~held~~, or in any name or manner, receive, record, or certify votes for the election of any pretended town, county or state officers, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and be punished by indictment with a fine not exceeding one thousand nor less than five hundred dollars, and be imprisoned for the term of six months: *Provided however*, that this act is not intended to apply to cases, in which, by accident or mistake, some prescribed form or forms of calling town or ward meetings of the freemen of the several towns of this State, and of the city of Providence, shall be omitted or overlooked.

Sec. 2. Any person or persons who shall in any manner signify that he or they will accept any executive, legislative, judicial or ministerial office or offices, by virtue of any such pretended election in any such pretended town, ward or other meeting or meetings, or shall knowingly suffer or permit his or their name or names, to be used as a candidate or candidates therefor, shall be adjudged guilty of a high crime and misdemeanor, and be punished by indictment in a fine of two thousand dollars, and be imprisoned for the term of one year.

SEC. 3. If any person or persons, except such as are

duly elected thereto, according to the laws of this State, shall under any pretended constitution of government for this State, or otherwise, assume to exercise any of the Legislative, Executive or ministerial functions of the offices of Governor, Lieutenant-Governor, Senators, members of the House of Representatives, Secretary of State, Attorney General, or General Treasurer of this State, or within the territorial limits of the same, as the same are now actually held and enjoyed, either separately or collectively, or shall assemble for the purpose of exercising any of said functions, all and every such exercise of, or meeting for the purpose of exercising all, any, or either of said functions, shall be deemed and taken to be a usurpation of the sovereign power of this State, and is hereby declared to be treason against the State, and shall be punished by imprisonment during life, as is now by law prescribed.

SEC. 4. All offences under this act shall be triable before the Supreme Judicial Court only. Any person or persons arrested under the same, and also for treason against the state, may be imprisoned or held in custody for trial in the jail of such county of the state as the Judge or Justice issuing the warrant may order or direct; and the sheriff or other officer charged with the service of such warrant, shall, without regard to his precinct, have full power and authority to take such person or persons and him or them to commit to any county jail in this state, which may be designated by such Judge or Justice; and it shall be the duty of all sheriffs, deputy sheriffs, town sergeants, constables and jailers to govern themselves accordingly. All indictments under this act, and also all indictments for treason against this state, may be preferred and found in any county of this state, without regard to the county in which the offence was committed; and the Supreme Judicial Court shall have full power for good cause, from time to time, to remove for trial any indictment which may be found under this act or for treason against the state, to such county of the state, as they shall deem best for the purpose of ensuring a fair trial of the same, and shall upon the conviction of any such offender or offenders, have full power to or-

der, and from time to time to alter the place of imprisonment of such offender or offenders to such county jail within this state or to the state prison as to them shall seem best for the safe custody of such offender or offenders, any act, law, or usage to the contrary notwithstanding.

The following Companies were formed into a Regiment, and marched for Chepachet, via Greenville, under the command of Col. Wm. W. Brown.

Bristol Artillery, Lt. Col. Taylor,	184
Prov. Marine Artillery, Lt. Col. Nightingale,	79
Prov. 1st. Lt. Infantry, Lt. Barber,	67
Newport Volunteers, Capt. Vars,	36
“ “ Capt. Swan,	40
Middletown Volunteers, Capt. Greene,	48
Barrington Volunteers, Capt. Humphrey,	32
Jamestown Volunteers, Capt. Childs,	15

496

The following force was posted at Woonsocket, under the command of Col. Josiah H. Martin.

Prov. National Cadets, Lt. Bourn,	92
Prov. Sea Fencibles, Capt. Mauran,	65
City Guards [detachment] under Capt. Olney,	108
Johnston Volunteers, Col. Tripp,	70
Woonsocket Volunteers, Capt. Passmore,	70

405

The following force marched to Chepachet, by the way of Scituate, under the command of Col. Swan.

Newport Artillery, Lt. Col. Taylor,	132
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Warren Artillery, Capt. Pearce,	84
Warren Infantry, Capt. Fessenden,	120
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	336

This whole force amounted to 1237, rank and file.

The Third Brigade, under the command of Gen. John B. Stedman, was composed of regiments and portions of regiments, and volunteers, as follows :

Third Reg. Col. Jon. R. Wells — 1st Comp. in Westerly, Capt. J. H. Perego — 2nd Comp. in Westerly, Capt. Clarke J. Champlin — 1st Comp. in Hopkinton, Lieut. Com. Daniel Langworthy — 3rd Comp. in Hopkinton, Capt. Thomas P. Dyer — 2nd Comp. in Charlestown, Capt. Daniel W. Wright.

116 Rank and File.

Eighth Reg. Lt. Col. Com. Warren D. Lillibridge, 1st Comp. in Exeter, Capt. Joseph W. Hill — 2nd Comp. in Exeter, Ensign Com. Jesse C. Hall — 3rd Comp. in Exeter, Capt. Amos R. Barber — 1st Comp. in N. Kingstown, Capt. Benj. T. Watson — 3rd Comp. in N. Kingstown, Capt. Olney T. Chadsey.

140 Rank and File.

Eleventh Reg. Col. Thomas T. Hoxsie — 1st Comp. in S. Kingstown, Capt. Silas U. Perry — 3rd Comp. in S. Kingstown, Lieut. Com. Joseph Sherman — 1st Comp. in Richmond, Lieut. Com. Benj. H. Reynolds — 2nd Comp. in Richmond, Capt. Horace Greene — Washington Grenadiers, S. Kingstown, Capt. Gideon Grinman.

69 Rank and File.

The whole number, rank and file, by the above return appears to have been 329, who were regularly mustered into the service. But, in addition to these, were about 250 volunteers, which increased the number to somewhere near 600.

The Volunteer Police Corps in the City of Providence, as before noticed, were organized under the name of City Guards. They constituted a regiment under the command of Col. Wm. W. Brown, for the protection and defence of the city, subject to the orders of the Mayor. A great many of the members were exempted from military duty, by law. The regiment was made up of companies, as follows:—

Comp. Ward No. 1. Capt. Stephen T. Olney.

“ No. 1. Ward No. 2 — Col. A. D. Hodges,
Lt. Com. Joseph W. Taylor.

“ No. 2. Ward No. 2. Capt. James M. Earle.

“ Ward No. 3 — Capt. James Shaw.

“ No. 1. Ward No. 4 — Capt. Benj. M. Lindsey.

“ No. 2. Ward No. 4. — Captain Samuel T. Thurber.

“ Ward No. 5 — Capt. James C. Hidden.

“ Ward No. 6 — Capt. Smith Bosworth.

The whole number enrolled in the regiment, was about one thousand men. Many of this number however were persons far passed the period of active military service, and were expected only to appear in the field in case of a sudden or pressing emergency. But there mustered for duty in the city, five hundred members, who were on guard, or other duty, some-

times to the number of three hundred or more at a time, day and night. At the same time there were one hundred and eight of the members, volunteers, at Woonsocket, in two companies, under the command of Capt. Stephen T. Olney, and Hiram Hill, fifty at Pawtucket under the command of Lieut. Edward R. Young, and a company of about seventy at Johnston under the command of Capt. James M. Earle. The regiment therefore mustered an effective force of a few more than seven hundred men.

The Kentish Guards, stationed at Pawtucket, under the command of Col. Allen mustered 50 men.

The United Train of Artillery, Col. Bradford Hodges, at Pawtucket, mustered about 30.

The Carbineers under Capt. Olney, also at Pawtucket, mustered 56.

Tiverton Volunteer Guards, Capt. Durfee — 45.

Pawucket and Central Falls Volunteers, Capt. Potter — 50.

Making in all, 281.

By the foregoing account, it will be seen that there was an effective force in the field, of about twenty eight hundred men, exclusive of officers ; besides which, were the Pawtucket Artillery, seventy strong, posted in Pawtucket on guard duty, to enforce martial law, and probably some small volunteer corps not enumerated. The force therefore would not vary much from three thousand.

Previous to the closing session of the Landholders' Convention, March, 1842, and as a measure of conciliation, the General Assembly, after having rejected a bill for the direct extension of suffrage, passed the following act:

"All persons now qualified to vote, and those who may be qualified to vote under existing laws previous to the time of such their voting, and all persons who shall be qualified to vote under the provisions of such [named in the preamble] constitution, shall be qualified to vote upon the question of the adoption of said Constitution." By reference to that constitution, it will be seen that its provisions amounted very nearly to universal suffrage.

At the same session, the Assembly passed the following Preamble and Resolutions.

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations.

In General Assembly, January Session, 1842.

Whereas a portion of the People of this State, without the forms of law, have undertaken to form and establish a Constitution of Government for the People of this State; and have declared such Constitution to be the Supreme Law; and have communicated such Constitution unto this General Assembly; and whereas many of the good People of this State are in danger of being misled by these informal proceedings; therefore,

It is hereby Resolved by this General Assembly, That all acts done by the persons aforesaid for the purpose of imposing upon this State a Constitution, are an assumption of the Powers of Government, — in violation of the rights of the existing Government, and of the rights of the people at large.

Resolved, That the Convention called and organized in pursuance of an act of this General Assembly, for the purpose of forming a Constitution to be submitted to the People of this State, is the only body which we can recognize as authorized to form such a constitution; and to this Constitution the whole People have a right to

look, and we are assured they will not look in vain, for such a form of Government as will promote their peace, security and happiness.

Resolved, That this General Assembly will maintain its own proper authority, and protect and defend the legal and constitutional rights of the People.

True copy: witness,

HENRY BOWEN, *Secretary*.

RESOLUTIONS

ADOPTED BY THE RHODE ISLAND SUFFRAGE ASSOCIATION, JANUARY 20, 1842.

1. *Resolved*, That the statement recently made and repeated in the General Assembly, by Representatives from this city, and by other members, that the People of this city and State, in their recent vote for the Constitution, which they have adopted, did not vote for the same with the desire or expectation that the same would be carried into effect, and that they voted merely to express an opinion in favor of an extension of Suffrage by a higher authority, — is a direct insult to the People, and is totally unfounded and false; and that we respond, heart and soul, as one man, to the unalterable determination avowed by our CONVENTION, to establish, sustain, and defend our entire CONSTITUTION BY ALL NECESSARY MEANS; PEACEABLY IF WE CAN, FORCIBLY IF WE MUST.

2. *Resolved*, That the Resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, on the 28th day of January, wherein the proceedings of the great majority of the People, in forming and adopting a Constitution, are described as the proceedings of a portion only of the same, as dangerous and contrary to law, as a usurpation of the powers of government, and in violation of the rights of the People at large, and requiring to be suppressed by the hand of authority and of force — are a daring invasion of the Rights of sovereignty, vested by the principles of our government, in the People of this State; — are false in fact, and at war with the doctrines of a Democratic

Republic, here founded and sustained by our venerable ancestors, — are worthy of the dark ages of monarchical oppression and misrule, — and justly entitle their authors, and their aiders, abettors and supporters, to the contempt and execration of the People of our State.

3. *Resolved*, That, while we regard these and all similar ebullitions of the rage of an expiring faction, with the feelings which they so justly deserve, and are ready to aid in consigning the partizans of that faction to the political doom which is their due, and which so speedily awaits them at the hands of the People of this State, we are also prepared to meet the threatened action of the Assembly, and to repel *force by force*.

4. *Resolved*, That any attempt on the part of the government of this State to molest or injure any man for the expression of his opinion upon our Constitution, or for his aid and support in carrying the same into effect, shall be promptly counteracted and suppressed by the strong arm of the People.

5. *Resolved*, That to the execution of the foregoing resolutions we pledge our truth, our substance, and if need be, our lives.

6. *Resolved*, That a Committee of Public Safety and Correspondence be forthwith raised in each ward of this city; and that it be recommended to our brethren in all towns of the State to raise similar Committees without delay.

7. *Resolved*, That the foregoing Resolutions be signed by the Chairman and Secretary, and issued, together with the Resolutions from Warwick, in an Extra, for distribution through the State.

J. A. BROWN, *Chairman*.

F. L. BECKFORD, *Secretary*.

Extract from Resolutions passed at Warwick.

Resolved. That we will not be compelled, by threats, which the General Assembly, or any other person, by their order, may see fit to hold over us, to abandon the PEOPLE'S CONSTITUTION, or any part of it, or to with-

draw our aid and assistance in putting the new government under it, into full operation.

Resolved, That, while we will abstain from all *offensive collision* with the lean minority who oppose the PEOPLE'S CONSTITUTION, we will be found ready to aid in carrying the new Government into effect by all necessary measures in our power.

From Resolutions passed at Woonsocket.

Resolved, That the General Assembly cannot by any legislative act, increase or diminish the validity of the People's Constitution.

Resolved, That the people by adopting the present Constitution, have virtually annulled and made void all existing acts of the General Assembly providing for a convention to form a Constitution; and should such convention re-assemble, we shall regard it as a faction putting at defiance the known will of the people.

Resolved, That we despise and hold in utter contempt, all threats and denunciations from whatever source they may emanate, put forth for the purpose of overawing the public and suppressing public sentiment.

Resolved, That we regard the recent efforts of a portion of our General Assembly to perpetuate the present unequal system of government, as the phrenzied acts of an expiring aristocracy, making war upon the inalienable rights of the people, and designed to screen their authors from that merited and inevitable doom, that speedily awaits them at the hands of the people.

Resolved, That we heartily respond to the Resolutions passed by the people in different sections of the State, expressing their firm determination to carry into effect the People's Constitution, and hereby declare that we are ready to perform any labors, to make any concessions, to encounter any difficulties, to meet any dangers, and make any sacrifices that the cause may require.

Resolutions of a similar character were passed in several other places; and in conformity with them, it soon became common to talk of arming, to carry out their spirit.

The following is the first section of the bill respecting the right of suffrage, introduced by Judge Pitman into the General Assembly, and passed by the Senate, at the January session, 1811. The remaining sections were designed merely to guard this one against abuses.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly, and by the authority thereof it is enacted, That every white male citizen of this State, who has attained to the age of twenty-one years, and who is rated for a poll or property tax, or who is or has been enrolled in the militia of this State, shall be hereafter entitled to vote for general officers of this State, and for persons to represent the respective towns in General Assembly: *Provided,* That no citizen shall be entitled to vote by virtue of his being or having been enrolled in the militia, who is exempted from military duty in consequence of any bodily defect or infirmity; *Provided also,* That no citizen shall be entitled to vote in any town for the officers or persons aforesaid, except the one wherein such citizen shall have been a resident for the space of one year next preceding the time of such voting; *And provided always,* That every citizen, qualified as aforesaid, shall be entitled to vote as aforesaid, notwithstanding he may not have been admitted a freeman in any town in this State.

The issuing of the following documents, was the first active measure of a defensive character, on the part of the Executive.

[OFFICIAL.]

BY HIS EXCELLENCY,
SAMUEL WARD KING,

Governor, Captain General and Commander-in-Chief of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations.

A PROCLAMATION.

Whereas sundry persons, citizens of this State, or residents within the same are conspiring and confederat-

ing to usurp the government thereof— are deceiving and seducing honest and well-meaning citizens, under various pretences, to engage in said criminal enterprise, contrary to the laws in such cases made and provided :

And whereas the General Assembly of our said State, at the session holden on the fourth Monday of March last, passed and enacted the following Resolution, viz ;

Resolved, That his Excellency the Governor be requested to issue his proclamation to the good people of this State, exhorting them to give no aid or countenance to those who, in violation of the law, may attempt to set up a government in opposition to the existing government of this State, and calling upon them to support the constituted authorities for the preservation of the public peace, and in the execution of those laws on which the security of all depends.

I do, therefore, issue this my Proclamation, warning and admonishing all faithful citizens who have been led, without due knowledge or consideration, to participate in the said unlawful enterprise, to withdraw from the same without delay ; and requiring also all persons whomsoever, engaged or concerned in the same, to cease all further proceedings therein, as they will answer the contrary at their peril. And I hereby enjoin and require all Judges, Justices of the Peace, Sheriffs, Deputy Sheriffs, and Constables, and all Military Officers, within their respective departments, and according to their several functions, to be vigilant and firm in detecting and bringing to condign punishment all persons engaged or concerned in such enterprise.

And furthermore, I do hereby exhort all the good people of this State, that they give no countenance to said unlawful enterprise, but that they do by their advice and example, aid and support the civil authority in its exertions to suppress all unlawful combinations, and maintain the peace and dignity of the State.

In testimony whereof, I have caused the seal of said State to be affixed to these presents, and have signed the same with my hand. Given at the
[L. S.] city of Providence on the fourth day of April, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hun-

dred and forty-two, and of the Independence of
the United States of America the sixty sixth.

SAMUEL WARD KING.

By his Excellency's command :

HENRY BOWEN,
Secretary of State.

ORDERS.

ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE, }
Providence, April 4, 1842. }

SIR : — You are hereby ordered forthwith to assemble the men under your command, and direct them to be in readiness at thirty minutes' warning, armed and equipped, to obey such orders as you may receive from the Commander-in-chief.

You are also ordered to report to this Department, immediately after the above meeting, the number of rank and file under your command, with a statement of their arms and equipments.

By order of his Excellency,

SAMUEL WARD KING,
Governor and Commander-in-chief.

ELISHA DYER, JR.,
Adjutant General of Rhode Island.

Copy of an original Order found in Dorr's Camp after its evacuation.

HEAD QUARTERS, GLOCESTER, June 25, 1842.

MR. SIMON MATHEWSON :

You are hereby directed on the receipt of this to assemble the volunteers of Scituate and form them into a company and march forthwith to Chepachet, each man

is directed to bring two days provision, together with all the arms and ammunition possible.*

The enemy threaten to attack us in our entrenchments immediately. Let every friend of Freedom be here without delay.

CHARLES E. NEWELL, *Quarter Master.*

By order of Gov. THOMAS W. DORR,
Commander-in-chief.

WILLIAM H. POTTER,† *Adjutant General.*

From the New Age of December 29, 1841.

FURIOUS IMBECILITY.

Never was the old maxim more completely verified than it has been of late in our vicinity. "Whom God wills to destroy, he first deprives of his understanding." Our opponents, especially the writers in the Providence Journal, seem to have partaken of the insane root; which has rendered them furious in their denunciation, at the same time that it has taken away the remains of sober judgment on all matters relating to political reform in this State. In the intervals of rage they subside for a time into the melting mood, and beg the suffrage men, with tears in their eyes, to surrender their rights, and relapse into the old dominion of their humane masters. Anon they storm and rage, draw the sword, touch off the cannon, slay on paper the friends of Republican freedom, and dance, with terrific agility, "through all the mazes of metaphorical confusion." This is "the beginning of the end." All seems to be going on well. The people are coming up to the work. Panic is written in lines not to be mistaken, upon the faces of the Tories. They threaten bravely through fear. No one heeds their idle ravings. Their impotent malice excites

* "All the arms and ammunition *possible*." That would include all you can buy, borrow, beg, or steal; and probably the Adjutant General, and the Quarter Master, persons of *much*, though not *high* celebrity, would not have been extremely fastidious as to which.

† Not Wm. H. Potter, Esq., a member of the Rhode Island Bar.

pity only ; it is hardly potent enough for contempt. We refer, in illustration of our remarks, to two pieces, side by side, in the Journal of Saturday last — the first of the threatening and exterminating order, by ‘Country Born,’ and the second one of the those pieces denominated “the oily puff,” coming over us with soft words, and highly appreciating the honest intentions of the non-freeholders ! Every thing indicates that the time of the corruptionists is short, and that they will soon be consigned, with their productions, to the limbo of vanity.

At a meeting in Johnston, on the fifth of February, 1842, it was

Resolved, That we will maintain and support the People's Constitution, and will resist, by all proper means, the adoption of any, and all other Constitutions, except in the mode pointed out in the People's Constitution.

Resolved, That the statements put forth by some members of the General Assembly, that the People would be satisfied if they obtained the Principles contained in the said People's Constitution in relation to Suffrage and representation, are false and groundless ; that we cannot be cajoled out of our rights, and will adhere to the Constitution, line for line, and letter for letter, until altered by the same power that enacted it ; and to the carrying out of the Constitution in its full extent, and to its maintenance by all necessary means, we pledge our fortunes and our honors.

Resolved, That we regard the threats of our opponents, as the ebullitions of impotent malice ; but if their audacity should ever carry them to the folly of opposing the people by force, we respond to the sentiment of our friends in the other parts of the State, and will repel force by force.

EPHRAIM WINSOR, *Chairman*.

At a meeting in Smithfield, on the fifth of February, 1842, it was

Resolved, That we respond heart and soul, as one

man, to the unalterable determination avowed by our Convention, to establish, sustain and defend our entire Constitution by all necessary means.

Resolved, that any attempt on the part of the Government of this State, to molest or injure any man for the expression of his opinion on the part of our Constitution, or for his aid and support in carrying the same into effect, shall be strongly counteracted and suppressed by the strong arm of the people, under our Constitution and the law of the land.

PALEMON WALCOTT, *Chairman*.

At a meeting in Newport, on the fifth day of February, 1842, Dutee J. Pearce, Milton Hall, and others, were appointed to report Resolutions, who reported the following, which were unanimously adopted :

Resolved, That the Constitution which we have adopted, ought to be, must be, and will be maintained, until by the people it shall be abolished or amended in the way which its own provisions prescribe.

Resolved, That we will readily co-operate with our fellow citizens throughout the State, in devising and executing the measures necessary for the preservation of their life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and if need be, to provide new guards for their security.

At a meeting in Tiverton, on the seventh of February, 1842, it was

Resolved, That our Constitution must and shall be sustained by all necessary means, peaceably if it may be so, forcibly if not.

At a meeting held in Burrillville, (one of the largest meetings ever held in that town,) on the second of February, 1842, it was

Resolved, That we cheerfully respond to the resolutions passed by the Warwick and Rhode Island Suffrage Association, in Providence, and will lend all necessary aid in our power, to carry the Government, under the People's Constitution, into successful operation.

At a meeting in Bristol, on the seventh of February, 1842, the following resolutions were adopted :

Resolved, That the Sovereignty of the People shall be maintained, and that all laws, enactments and resolutions, repugnant to the People's Constitution, will be considered by us, illegal usurpation.

Resolved, That the will of the People, as contained in their Constitution, is the paramount law of this State, and that we will take all proper measures to protect it as such, and to effect its permanent establishment and binding legality as the supreme law of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations.

At a meeting at the Town House, Providence, on the twenty-fifth of February, 1842, it was

Resolved, That trusting in the goodness of our cause, and in the union, harmony, and energetic determination of its friends, we bid defiance to all influences of any kind which can be brought to bear against us, and that we know of no real friend of our republican constitution, who can be deterred or driven from its support.

At a meeting on Cumberland Hill, March 1st. 1842, it was

Resolved, That we will sustain the People's Constitution by every means which the love of liberty may inspire in the human bosom.

Resolved, That it is currently reported that the expiring aristocracy of R. I. have already visited the states of New York and Massachusetts requesting military aid to chain the free spirit of Rhode Islanders; we look upon the measures as an evidence of their fears and are resolved that in this case the fears of the wicked shall come upon them.

Resolved, That we will peaceably submit to the authorities of this state until a certain day named in the People's Constitution, when we will not be governed by any other power but such as is provided by the constitution unless forced by the strong arm of Power.

Resolved, That the time may come when further forbearance may cease to be a virtue, and we shall consider that time as arrived whenever there is any hindrance to the peaceable action of the People's Constitution.

Resolved, That we stand ready at a moment's warning, with our lives and honor, to carry into full effect the People's Constitution according to the conditions of the same, unless otherwise ordered by the General Government of the Nation.

At a meeting held at Woonsocket, February, twenty-six, 1842, it was

Resolved, That the People's Constitution will be maintained at all and any hazard.

Resolved, That we, as one man, will, by every means in our power, oppose the adoption of this spurious constitution, nor abate our efforts until it shall be one of the things that were.

At a meeting at the Town House, Providence, April first, 1842, the following resolution, offered by Mr. Dorr, was unanimously passed :

Resolved, That any attempt, under color of a pretended l.w. or otherwise, to deprive the citizens of their right peaceably to assemble and elect their officers under said Constitution, or to molest the persons so elected, shall be counteracted by all such means as the occasion shall demand.

The following resolutions were passed at regularly called meetings of the party on Thursday evening, April seventh :

Resolved, That we the friends of the People's Constitution of this state, proceed to organize ourselves into military companies. And that we hereby agree to equip and place ourselves under the command of the person who may be elected to command the said companies, for the purpose of protecting the lives and property of our friends and fellow citizens in this city and state.

Resolved, That we the people of the Sixth Ward, will nominate our Warden, Clerk, Justices of the Peace, and two citizens to be elected Representatives to the General Assembly ; and that we will protect and defend them in the discharge of their duty, against all power or force which may attempt to molest them, both by day and night ; and that we will guard the polls on the eighteenth for that purpose.

Resolved, That to preserve peace it is necessary to prepare for war ; and for that purpose we hereby pledge ourselves to form two volunteer companies of the citizens of this ward of one hundred men each, and that we will submit to, and obey in true military style, the commands and orders of the officers who may be chosen in command.

Resolved, That we recommend each friend of the People's Constitution, to provide himself with a good rifle or musket, and at least forty ball cartridges, so that he may be ready, to defend his rights at *twenty* minutes warning.

P. S. From the period of Mr. Dorr's flight from Chepachet, up to the present time, [August 1,] the public have had no certain tidings of him. Though rumor has been extremely busy in attempting to point him out, and many, no doubt, tempted by the reward of five thousand dollars for his apprehension, would be happy to shake hands with him, he has eluded all inquiries, and kept himself invisible. Whether he has remained secreted in any one place, or kept on the move from place to place, unseen, or has left the country, is a problem that remains to be solved. What was the plan of arrangements made by him, for carrying on the war, if he had made any, the public have never been distinctly apprised from any official source. There can be little doubt, however, from hints thrown out by many of his adherents, and open declarations from others, that the first movement, after he should have found himself sufficiently strong to make it, was to be, on the city of Providence. Such a movement would certainly have been vitally essential to his cause, and that at an early period ; because, without it, he could not have obtained possession of a dollar of the

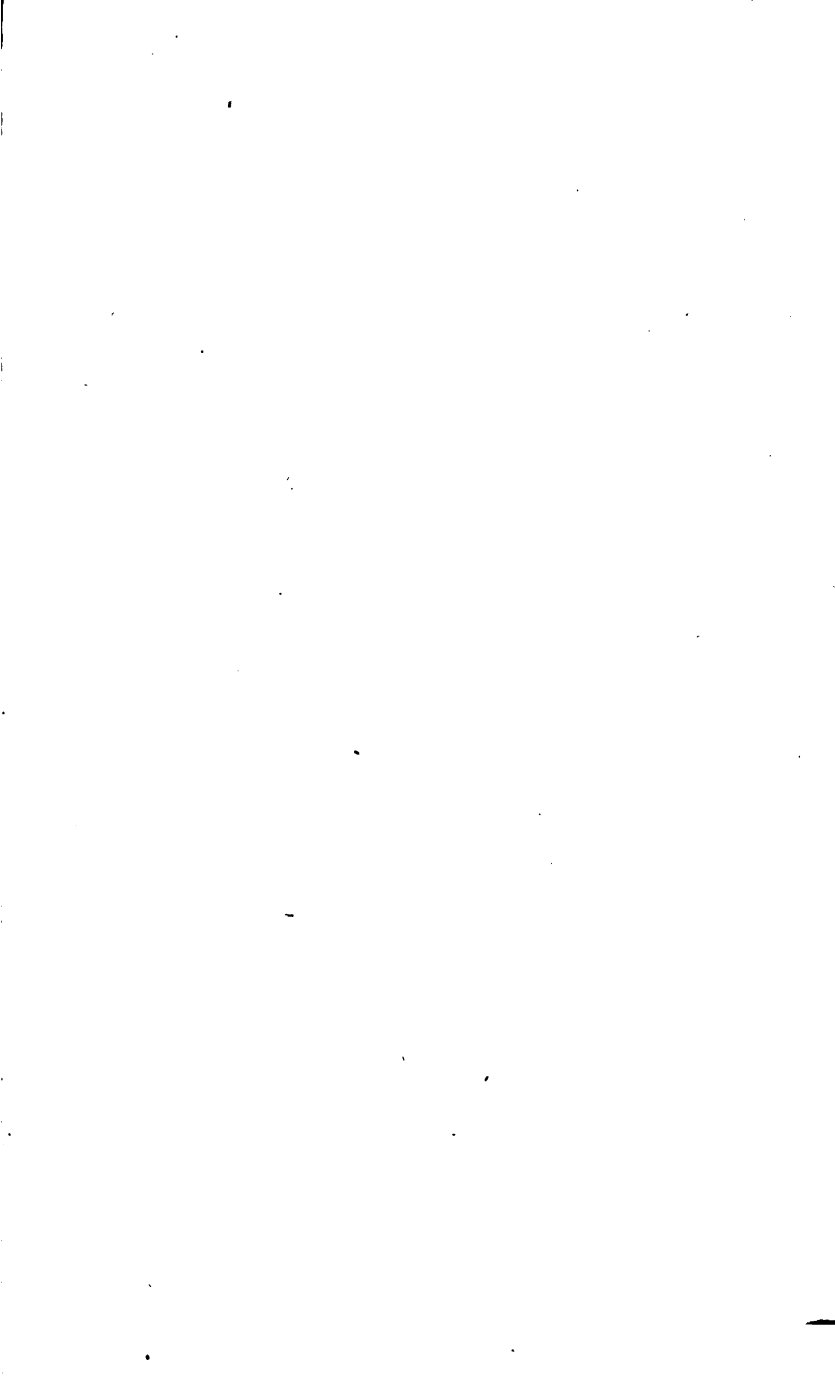
public property, nor commanded supplies for his troops. He seems to have believed that the city would be surrendered to him almost without resistance ; but he was much disappointed on finding what a small number of the citizens would join him, and more especially chagrined and astonished, at the ease and readiness with which Gov. King embodied a military force, for offensive or defensive operations, amounting to three thousand men.

Whatever were Dorr's intentions, had the city been captured by him, we know not. But several gentlemen residents of the city, were warned by others friendly to them, and in the secrets of the camp at Chepachet, or assuming and presumed to be so, to leave the city by a certain time ; or, if they would not themselves leave, at least to send out their families. That many of Dorr's adherents expected the city to be given up to plunder for twenty-four hours, and its fair daughters into their brutal hands, is known from their own declarations, and might have been fully apprehended from their well known character. And these are men whom Dorr himself could not have controlled, had he possessed the inclination to do so. The prisoners captured were, most of them, this class of men, whose tender mercies would have proved cruelties ; and whose triumph, had it occurred, no doubt would have been characterised by the most ferocious brutality ; for it cannot be disguised, that, by far the greater portion of the Dorr party, abandoned by most of the respectable suffrage men, had become neither more nor less than an irresponsible and unprincipled mob. This statement challenges denial ; and so true is it, that even the officers in command in his camp, and who surrounded his person, with two or three exceptions, were men with whom no reputable person who knew them, even of their own party, would associate.

In making these statements, the writer has no spleen to vent, and no private or party object to advance. They are made because they are known to be true; not only by the writer, but by this whole community; and would, if necessary, be attested by two-thirds of the suffrage party of Rhode Island; and to them he would confidently appeal, for the truth or falsity of the foregoing work, as it relates to the doings of that party, and the manner in which they have been deceived and imposed on by a few political demagogues, with Thomas W. Dorr at their head; and who came in at the eleventh hour, to promote their own objects of private ambition.









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